

COUNTRY LIFE

THE JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN
COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY PURSUITS. **ILLUSTRATED.**

VOL. VII.—No. 163. [REGISTERED AT THE
G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.] SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17th, 1900.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.
BY POST, 6½d.]



Photo. MISS A. MARSLAND

MISS MARGUERITE DARELL.

Copyright.



THE Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Our Frontispiece: Miss Marguerite Darell	193, 199
A Word to Dog-owners	194
Country Notes	195
Roeder Shooting. (Illustrated)	197
Racing Notes	199
Literary Notes	199
The Art of Eel Shearing. (Illustrated)	200
Teddy's Venture: A Berkshire Character Sketch	201
Ultima Thule.—I. (Illustrated)	203
In the Garden	205
Country House Dairies.—II. Outlines of Management. (Illustrated)	205
An Interloper. (Illustrated)	207
Gardens Old and New: Stanwick Park. (Illustrated)	208
Books of the Day	212
John Charity: A Romance of Yesterday. (Illustrated)	213
Sport in the Snow. (Illustrated)	215
Shooting Gossip	217
At the Theatre	218
O'er Field and Furrow	219
Arum Lilies and New Zealand Flax in Scotland. (Illustrated)	219
The Bison of the Caar. (Illustrated)	221
On the Green	222
Hodge on the War-path	222
Correspondence	223

EDITORIAL NOTICE.

The Editor will be glad to receive for consideration photographs, instantaneous or otherwise, besides literary contributions, in the shape of articles and descriptions, as well as short stories, sporting or otherwise, not exceeding 2,000 words. Contributors are specially requested to place their names and addresses on their MSS. and on the backs of photographs. The Editor will not be responsible for the return of artistic or literary contributions which he may not be able to use, and the receipt of a proof must not be taken as evidence that an article is accepted. Publication in COUNTRY LIFE alone will be recognised as acceptance. Where stamps are enclosed, the Editor will do his best to return those contributions which he does not require.

With regard to photographs, the price required for reproduction, together with all descriptive particulars, must be plainly stated. If it is desired that the photographs should be returned, a sufficiently stamped and directed envelope must be enclosed for the purpose.

It must be distinctly understood that no one will be treated with who is not the owner of the copyright of the photograph submitted, or who has not the permission in writing of the owner of the copyright to submit the photograph to the Editor of COUNTRY LIFE for reproduction.

Vols. V. and VI. of COUNTRY LIFE are now ready, and can be obtained on application to the Publisher. Price, bound in green half-morocco, 25s. per volume, or 21s. in green cloth, gilt edges. Vols. I., II., III., and IV. are out of print. All cheques should be made payable to the Proprietors, COUNTRY LIFE.

* On account of the regulations of the Postal Authorities, the index to Vol. VI. of COUNTRY LIFE is not included in the body of the paper, but it will be forwarded free to subscribers by the Manager upon the receipt of a stamped and addressed wrapper.

The charge for small Advertisements of Property for Sale or to Let, Situations Wanted, etc., etc., is 5s. for 40 words and under, and 1s. for each additional 10 words or less. All orders must be accompanied by a remittance, and all matters relating to Advertisements should be addressed to the Manager, 20, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

A WORD TO . . . DOG-OWNERS.

IT would be too much to assume that every reader of COUNTRY LIFE is necessarily the owner of a dog; but it is probably well within the mark to say that the overwhelming majority of our constituents are persons who own dogs or are interested in them. Very few of them, we are confident, belong to that small but pestilent band of persons who positively dislike "the friend of man." At any rate, it is as dog-owners and as lovers of dogs that we venture to address to our brothers and to our sisters a word in season of warning and of caution, and the reason for this little sermon is that signs are not wanting among dog-owners of a tendency to exaggerate their grievances, to cry out before they are hurt, and thus to alienate the sympathies of that section of the public which does not care much one way or the other

about dogs and their mistresses and masters. Our reference is mainly to certain letters concerning Mr. Walter Long's proposed Regulation of Dogs Bill, letters which, no matter how good they may be in intention, are calculated to prejudice the interests of dog-owners.

A retrospect of the history of recent canine legislation and of its application, particularly in and about London, undoubtedly shows that we have been ill and clumsily treated. Our dogs suffered under the County Council, and then, after a holiday from the muzzle just long enough to impart an added sting to the misery of its reimposition, they fell into the clutches of the Board of Agriculture. Muzzling, we all declared, was at best a poor remedy, since it could never reach the dogs which were a real source of danger. It entailed a great deal of personal inconvenience upon dog-owners, who were informed in leading articles of august tone that to complain of personal inconvenience was unworthy and ignoble. As a matter of fact, there is in our experience nothing which the average man or woman dislikes more, or with better reason.

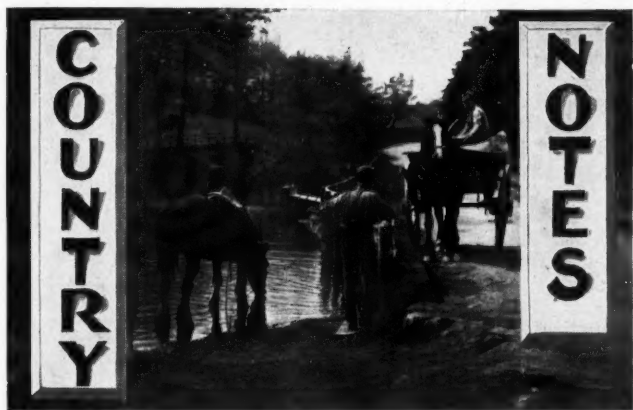
Then it was pointed out repeatedly, and with excellent reason, that whether muzzling could or could not be expected to bring about the much-desired end of the extirpation of rabies, sporadic and sectional muzzling was obviously blundering and exasperating. So far the complaint was just and in accordance with right reason; but beyond that some of us who were dog lovers undoubtedly went too far. Firstly, we exaggerated the discomfort which the muzzle caused to the dog, using high-flown expressions, such as "torture" and "agony," whereas, in truth, the worst thing to be said against a well-fitting muzzle was that it was abominably ugly. That kind of exaggeration was pardonable and natural.

But some of us went further, and were heard to avow that the whole of the crusade against rabies was unnecessary, that there was no such thing as hydrophobia, and so forth; and that was sheer and almost wicked nonsense. The writer of this article has never seen a case of hydrophobia, and he hopes never to see one.

Mr. Walter Long confessed himself to be in the same position of inexperience; but there is really no resisting the accumulated evidence that hydrophobia, although it is very rare, does exist, that it is the most terrible disease conceivable, and that in many cases it occurs in persons who have had the misfortune to be bitten by a rabid dog. Our own impression is that nerves have a good deal to say in the matter, and, shocking as the theory may appear to some persons, that there would be less hydrophobia if there were not so many people who fly to the doctor and to the chemist to be cauterised whenever a dog's tooth happens to penetrate their skins.

Meanwhile the authorities of the Board of Agriculture, in spite of a great deal of abuse, went on implacably. They proclaimed now this district, now that; they withdrew the incubus here and imposed it there. Londoners especially almost came to the despairing conclusion that the reign of King Muzzle was to last for ever, and when the glad tidings to the contrary came it was hardly credited. It seemed too good to be true; but it was true, simply because, after a prolonged period of muzzling, the statistics of rabies, always rightly suspected, had been reduced to zero. Some of us cried *non propter hoc quia post hoc*, and we may have been right. But the general view of the public, based upon results only, is that Mr. Long proved his case, and he is now admired as a man whom no amount of clamour will divert from his set purpose. There, at any rate, is the salient and inestimable fact that, at the present moment, rabies is practically non-existent in Great Britain, and we are inclined to think the dog-owners will be well advised to give Mr. Long their hearty support in all well-considered measures for rendering its reintroduction impossible. This they can do, not merely by giving their suffrages to the measures themselves after, by dint of sober and thoughtful criticism, they have been moulded into a generally acceptable form, but also by obeying the spirit of them in a loyal fashion. Above all, let them not cry out before they are hurt, for that is a proceeding not merely unmanly but provocative of reprisals. Yet such a cry has already been raised. Somebody among the political busybodies who make it their business to ferret out the secrets of Government offices, and to invent them on occasion, has announced that the next Dog's Bill is to follow, more or less closely, the lines of the last; and in the last there were some features not merely objectionable, but also intolerable. But before we launch out in invective against Mr. Long, who does not seem to feel it in the least degree, let us at least be certain that he has failed to learn the lessons of experience, and that he has not excised the objectionable features.

If he has, then his Bill, so far as it accords with our views of what is reasonable, will have our strong support, for there is no sort of doubt that the laws regulating the status of the dog and his owner, as such, are by no means clear or satisfactory at present.



THE announcements of Tuesday morning from the seat of war were practically two. There was to be no news, or next to none, for a few days, and afterwards more freedom than heretofore was to be accorded to the correspondents; and this change of plan coincided with the appearance of Lord Roberts at the place where he was most wanted—at the Modder River. Nobody will grumble at the blocking of news for a while; everybody will be glad that it should be permitted to percolate more freely afterwards. We are not a hysterical nation—we can bear the strain of living at the end of a telegraph wire fairly well; but the notion that the news is being toned down to suit our sensibilities is calculated to intensify that strain very considerably.

This is, perhaps, hardly the place in which to enunciate a judgment upon the new military proposals of the Government. It will be enough to say that, as a temporary measure, and as a prelude to thorough reorganisation, they appear to be fairly acceptable. Moreover, the statements made as to the available forces of the country at this moment are of a somewhat reassuring character. The inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland are at all times so keenly to the fore in pointing out the defects of everything and every institution which belongs to the country, that the statement that we have any force still available comes almost as a surprise. One single regret we venture to express. Considerable as is the provision made for an immediate increase of mounted infantry, we could wish, with Lord Wantage, V.C., that it were even greater. It is rather the fashion in these days to talk as if the Boer War were the first experience from which military authorities might have learned the inestimable value of mounted infantry. But that, of course, is not so. The American Civil War made the lesson as plain as possible, and Sir George Chesney impressed it many years ago; but he preached to deaf ears.

"Mobility, Mobility, Mobility"—that should be the watchword. And in this connection Mr. Winston Churchill's very brilliant despatch, published on Tuesday morning, makes gloomy reading:

"The vast amount of baggage this army takes with it on the march hampers its movements and utterly precludes all possibility of surprising the enemy. I have never before seen even officers accommodated with tents on service, though both the Indian Frontier and the Soudan lie under a hotter than the South African sun. But here to-day, within striking distance of a mobile enemy whom we wished to circumvent, every private soldier has canvas shelter, and the other arrangements are on an equally elaborate scale. The consequence is that roads are crowded, drifts are blocked, marching troops are delayed, and all rapidity of movement is out of the question. Meanwhile the enemy completes the fortification of his positions, and the cost of capturing them rises. It is a poor economy to let a soldier live well for three days at the price of killing him on the fourth."

This is the criticism of a man who knows—and it is true. Even in our peace manoeuvres at home there is far too much of luxury encouraged, and our soldiers have next to no experience of bivouacking. Yet they can stand it well enough, as Colonel Cave, of the Hampshire Volunteers, proved by a wonderful march and bivouac of his battalion in the Isle of Wight not very long ago.

The influenza epidemic seems to be abating the violence of its attacks on the human system, but just at this most unlucky time a great many of our horses are suffering from it under its equine form, so that some of our Yeomanry forces are delayed from taking the field. The Boer horses, we hear, are suffering from "pink eye," and since some of the sufferers are found wandering into our camps it is more than suspected that they may have been designedly sent to give our horses the complaint. We are now told that the Boers deem it beneath their dignity to ride mares, so somewhere in their country, if we ever get there, there should be fine equine reserves for our own mounted forces to draw on. True, the mares will need breaking; but experience

with the Basuto ponies is teaching many of our men and officers the trade of horse-breaking.

There is balm in Gilead, and compensation for discomfort even at the Cape. When our City Volunteers arrived last week they found that the torrid heat of their journey north was not to be aggravated by thirst. In each carriage the loyal citizens of Cape Town had placed a great basket of grapes and a huge water melon. Then, to their surprise, they realised that they had arrived at the beginning of the glorious fruit season of South Africa, and that they were in a land of grapes, apricots, peaches, nectarines, pears, and other luscious fruits, such as the loquat and orange of warmer climes. No outdoor fruit in the world equals that of the Cape orchards. It is of all sorts, from the commonest black vineyard grapes, sold by the cartload, to Japanese plums, so fine in flavour that those imported to this country last March sold at 1s. each. What a contradiction it is that the curse of Africa, whatever that destiny is, always neutralises in different forms its magnificent natural resources.

Many good stories of the answers given by men in high places to those who worry them over matters on which they must not speak are being told just now. The best of them perhaps is one made by Lord Wolseley, who, on an attempt being made to pump him as to his opinion about the war, replied that he had heard that the flowers on the banks of the Tugela were exceedingly beautiful.

To controversies concerning the pronunciation of Dutch names and places there is no end. For example, we have known Kruger to be pronounced as if it were German, with a modified *u*, and we have known it to be pronounced as if the *g* were a strong guttural. Curiously enough a guttural pronunciation was given to the writer by a Dutchman who had undoubtedly held an official position in Johannesburg. On the other hand, an Englishman who had been in the President's house declared that Mr. and Mrs. Kruger both of them pronounced the name as if it had been German. Then there has been the same sort of trouble about Mafeking; but the indefatigable "B.P." has found time in the middle of excursions and alarms to settle that controversy by sending some clever Latin verses to his old head-master, beginning:

"E. Mafeking brevis est."

Truly "B.P.'s" spirits are about the most wonderful thing of our generation.

The old Persian "public school training" instructed them to ride, to draw the bow, and to speak the truth. For the latter read "character," and for the former "manly games," and our public school training does not differ in general aim from that of the conquerors of the Medes. But Dr. Warre, of Eton, very sensibly wishes to imitate the old Persians rather more closely, and to teach his boys all and several the use of the national weapon, reading "rifle" for bow. In an address to the Bucks County Council he says he would have every public school boy over fifteen taught to shoot with the Service rifle. Dr. Warre commanded the Eton Cadet Corps when an assistant master, and knows what he is talking about. But why not begin earlier than fifteen? There are many boys younger than this serving in the Boer army. The carbine or the Morris tube will teach the rudiments excellently well, and the target cards would make admirable "home reports."

Wherever golfers do congregate, and that is everywhere, the lamentable death of Lieutenant F. G. Tait, of the Black Watch, will be felt as a deep and abiding sorrow. Like so many others, including Colonel Buchanan-Riddell, he was once wounded, and recovered sufficiently to take up active service again. But the second bullet found a vital spot, and with the words "They have got me this time" perished a gallant man and a modest, whose like we cannot expect to look upon often again.

"I called to consult my lawyer; he was clothed in a dragoon's dress, belted and casqued, and about to mount a charger, while his writing-clerk (habited as a sharpshooter) walked to and fro before his door. I went to scold my agent for having sent me to scold with a madman; he had stuck into his head the plume which in more sober days he wielded between his fingers, and figured as an Artillery officer. My mercer had his spontoon in his hand, as if he measured his cloth by that implement, instead of a legitimate yard. The banker's clerk, who was directed to sum my cash account, blundered it three times, being disordered by the recollection of his military telling-off at the morning drill." In such whimsical wise did a splendid patriot, through the mouth of Jonathan Oldbush, describe the burst of patriotism with which the country met Napoleon's menaces in the early years of the century. With very few changes they apply to-day.

No doubt there are inconveniences in the hard weather that has come on us in February; but the frost is really a most timely aid to the agriculturist, especially to the farmer of a stiff soil, which he would have found bad to work after the heavy rains but for the disintegrating assistance of the many degrees of frost. Moreover, we may expect a comparative immunity from those insect plagues that have been so besetting in the last two summers that followed winters of abnormal mildness. And the fox-hunters, as many as are left in the land, had a very fairly open first half of the season, so that no one has much just cause to complain.

The recent snowfall came down in the gentle insidious manner that is especially hard on the evergreen shrubs and trees, the laurels, Irish yews, and, more especially, the cedars of Lebanon. When snow is imminent, and indeed at all times, it is well to have the Irish yews well bound together. There is a weakness in the relatively upright growth of their branches that makes them more apt to be "broken abroad," in the expressive phrase of the country people, than the genuine English yew. The cedar of Lebanon, with its flat slabs of boughs and foliage, is naturally a perfect trap for a snowfall, and this noble tree suffers cruelly. At several places where the Lebanon cedars are a "feature" they help the finest specimens by putting lighted braziers of charcoal under the tree, to the end that the warm current of air ascending may thaw the snow as it falls and prevent it lying in all its density.

Three sudden and inexplicable outbreaks of foot and mouth disease in Norfolk have caused something like a panic among stock-breeders. The losses caused by this wasting and contagious illness have been reckoned by millions of pounds. It is the disease against which the elaborate machinery of our Contagious Diseases of Animals Acts is mainly directed, and after being completely stamped out it has suddenly reappeared, fortunately in adjacent localities, so that the area to be dealt with is small—at present. The Acts, if strictly enforced, would, until a clean bill of health is proclaimed, fix every beast in the area to the actual farm, and almost to the field, in which it now is. No sheep, pig, or head of cattle might cross a high road. Mr. Long, in answer to entreaties, has given permission for them to be taken to Yarmouth, Lowestoft, and Norwich for sale and slaughter, and to be moved along roads for grazing purposes. In other words, he has chosen to dispense with the main provisions of the Acts. It is a dangerous experiment, which can only be justified on the ground that every animal sick, and every animal which has been in possible contact with them, has already been killed. But who can say that this is even probable?

Mr. Plunkett's answer in the House of Commons concerning the results of experiments in the growth of tobacco in Ireland provoked laughter, but it was not the laughter of wise men. "This Irish tobacco is nearly twice as strong as the strongest tobacco sold, and therefore, presumably for some purposes, twice as good. The cost of production, including manufacture, was 4d. per pound, and the excise duty 2s. 8d. At the lowest estimate the tobacco sells wholesale at 4s. per pound, yielding a net profit of £132 per acre." For the life of us we can see nothing to laugh at in this, for the question of strength is one which must depend, partly at any rate, on the quality of the variety sown, and in the matter of curing there is clearly a great deal to be learned. Surely in days when agriculture is pursued in the face of considerable difficulties a profit of £132 per acre is not to be sneezed at. For a fine quality of tobacco we can hardly hope; but if in Northern France a tobacco can be produced which men can smoke and can learn to like, something of the kind can surely be done in Southern England. Moreover, the fact that a large profit can be made from home-grown tobacco is not by any means novel. It was demonstrated time after time during the Stuart period, and the original restrictions upon its growth were imposed during that period, "to encourage the growth of tobacco in our American colonies."

It is in the provincial papers that one often finds mention of matters which have an interest quite out of proportion to their importance. How many of us, for example, who are not Roman Catholics are aware of a very interesting ceremony which takes place every year at the church of St. Ethelburga in Ely Place on the Feast of St. Blaise? How many of us, again, knew that St. Blaise is the patron saint of woolmakers, who suffer acutely from disease of the throat? Hence comes the ceremony of the blessing of the throats on St. Blaise's Day. The officiating priests carry lighted candles and cross them under the chin of each worshipper, and touch his or her throat and pronounce a little special prayer; and the results are said to be wonderful. There may, perhaps, be those who will decry the practice as superstitious. To us it seems at the worst harmless, and at the best a most pretty and poetical idea.

Those who wish to preserve our rarer birds will derive no great satisfaction from knowing that 350 were on view at the recent bird show at the Crystal Palace, and among them those very scarce species the rose-coloured pastor and the hoopoe. Such exhibitions give them a fancy value, with the result that they can scarcely show themselves, far less breed, without being subject to the wiles of the pot-hunting collector. A curious instance came under our notice not long ago. A true ornithologist bought a Norfolk marsh near the Broads for the express purpose of preserving the bearded tits in it. There were four nests last year, but the fact getting wind, three of them were harried. No doubt if the young were successfully reared they figure in shows now. Of some other species there are certainly more in confinement than at liberty, and it is merely barbarous to make a practice of rearing nightingales, cuckoos, and other migrants for exhibition.

This sudden weather promises to be very hard on birds. In a succession of open winters they have got up their numbers, sadly reduced by the bitter winters of 1894-95 and 1895-96. The little song-thrush was at that time nearly exterminated, but has recovered wonderfully. It is a delicate creature, quite unlike the loud-singing, robust missel-thrush. The worst time for birds is a hard frost with snow on the ground. If well fed they are capable of withstanding the severest cold of our climate, but easily succumb when weakened by famine. Even the sturdy rook in a long snowstorm goes literally "as thin as a crow," and gunners know how easily in that condition he falls at almost any distance if struck by the stray pellet. Luckily the humane and pretty practice of feeding birds in the garden is growing, and though the efforts of one individual count for little, those of many may help mercifully to preserve the songsters who a few weeks hence will be vocal.

A very curious Welsh fishery case was decided the other day in the Divisional Court in a manner which may have far-reaching results. The appellant was a person who had been convicted of salmon-poaching on a part of the River Mawddach, in Merionethshire, and in fact he had fished with a boat and a net on water which up to that time had been believed to be private property—and not his private property either. His defence was that it was a navigable river, and that he had a perfect right to fish there. In strict law the magistrates meeting with this defence should have refused to convict, and should have recognised that their jurisdiction was ousted. For it is a curious legal survival that magistrates have no jurisdiction in a case where the defence consists of a claim of right, however flimsy that claim may be. Then comes the terrible question, what is a navigable river? Is it any kind of water on which a fisherman can navigate the smallest kind of boat, including a coracle? If so, the end of many a private fishery has come.

As a nation, we are all too prone to "take short views," and recognise inadequately what is really for our good. This is a view that the Duke of Abercorn was lately pressing on the Board of Trade in his speech in favour of keeping up the Frank Buckland Museum of Fish Culture, which seems threatened with a sad end through want of funds. The Duke pointed out that we spend scarcely any of our national money on investigation of fish life, or on its propagation and preservation, and contrasted our niggardliness with the liberality of the United States' expenditure on these objects. Yet to ourselves, in a small sea-girt country, fish is a much more important food supply than to the United States. It is exactly for the purpose of teaching us how to use this supply wisely that such a museum as that with which the late Frank Buckland's name is associated was founded, and it will be a short-sighted policy indeed that allows it to die for want of funds.

With so many people going abroad and the stringency of money owing to hard weather and dear coal and many calls on the purse, one would have expected that there would have been a good many dogs left homeless; but enquiry at the Home for Lost Dogs at Battersea has shown that, so far from this being the case, there have been fewer derelict dogs than usual this winter. It is good news. As a rule, the carelessness or heartlessness of owners of dogs seems very remarkable, only an average of about 20 per cent. of the dogs that come to the home ever being reclaimed. Yet the home is very well known now, and in the great majority of cases it can be but sheer idleness that prevents people from making enquiry there. It is a comfort to think that the dogs are comfortably housed there, and when their period of grace is up are put out of the world without the least suffering. A look at the inmates of the home gives an indication of the fashion in dogs prevailing at the moment. At one time it is dachshunds, at another collies; a little while ago it was fox-terriers. Just now there seem to be more Irish terriers than any other species.

There seems to be no little likelihood that Cambridge will lose her racquet and fives courts. They do not pay, and in consequence there is much trouble in keeping them up. In point of fact they are of the kind of institutions that ought to be self-supporting, without subsidies, and their failure to support themselves is the strongest argument against their deserving subsidy. And, after all, we do not know of any charitable body or State institution at all likely to subsidise them. The inference is that the games of racquets and fives are losing popularity with the undergraduates. Perhaps the reason is the coming

of golf. "There is no play now," was the wail of the racquet marker at the Woolwich court, "since this d—d Scotch croquet has come in." It may be the same cause working to the detriment of the racquet courts of Cambridge. But we should have thought there were undergraduates enough to play both games.

There are so many military racquet players away with our troops in South Africa, notably Colonel J. Spens, Major Eastwood, and Captain Eustace Crawley, that it has been decided to postpone, *sine die*, the military racquet championship.

ROEDEER SHOOTING.

NATURE has many motherly ways of preserving her children. Some insects are protected by a habit that they have of "shamming dead," that, at least, is what we call it, though probably they have no consciousness of the rôle they are acting. At all events, they turn over, with stiffened limbs, so that the insectivorous bird that finds them says at once: "Oh, he's no fun! He's a dead man." Then there are others that are protected by their likeness to unimportant leaves, as the "praying mantis"; others that go unnoticed from their resemblance to tiny twigs, such as the caterpillars of the "looper" kind. Then there is all the class of those that escape by mere virtue of colour in harmony with their environment.

The ptarmigan plumps down on a patch of snow and you search for him in vain; a flock of ringed plover settles on a bare piece of sand, and, though you walk right through the midst of the flock, you cannot detect the birds. It is said that the striped and gaudy tiger—though he has weapons of offence enough—is yet almost invisible in the bright colouring of a tropical jungle. The list might be stretched to a great length. But, amongst all the adepts at concealing themselves from human observation, we can hardly think that any creature is more skilful than the roedeer. The roe is a deer of some size—that is to say, he stands as much as 3ft. high at the shoulder, and carries his head proudly in the air beyond that, thus being a monster in comparison with some of the tiny anteopes. And it may quite well happen—it does, in fact, happen—that you may live week after week, passing through it two or three times daily, beside a covert of very moderate size, in which you know for a fact that there are several pairs of roe, and see never a one. In all probability they are not always hiding. Likely enough they are standing at gaze at times, and at times, likely enough, quite close to you as you go through the wood that is their haunt. Animals seem to realise better than we the virtue of absolute immobility if we would remain invisible.

No doubt the roe will sometimes conceal themselves, like others of their kind, by lying with neck stretched out and head closely pressed on the ground, as an antelope will lie almost invisible on

a bare stretch of desert sand; but more often it is likely that the roe is simply standing still in the covert's shade, ready to be off like a flash the moment he feels your eye upon him. The quickness with which the roe and all the shy wild things are conscious of detection by the human vision is marvellous, and seems as if it must be magnetic or instinctive rather than a simple result of the familiar sensation. In colour the roe changes with the seasons in such manner that it harmonises alike with the summer and the winter tints—in summer more warm and tawny in tone, in winter less conspicuous and more grizzly. And these changes, according to the writer's information—for he cannot boast of any personal acquaintance with the roe of the South of



WAITING FOR THE ROE.

England—are more marked in those that live in the Northern climes, where the winter is colder than in the South. This would look rather as though the partial change of coat were a survival from the time when the change was more decided, as in the case of the mountain hare, "blue," as the tint is commonly named, in summer, and white in winter. This same effect is also seen in the stoat and many other creatures, the winter change of coat to the hue of snow occurring only in those regions where there is likely to be snow for it to match—so careful is kind Mother Nature of her children.

There is but one way of successfully competing with the excessive shyness of the roe. If there be "another way," at least, known to the cookery books, it is not known to the writer. This "only way" is the driving method—beating them to guns posted ahead. All attempts at stalking them are defeated, for in order to stalk them it is necessary first to see them, and the chances are at least a thousand to one that long before you see them they will see you and will not remain to be stalked. But, if you are posted ahead, and they be driven to you, there is at least a chance that they may come within shot. The chief condition of success is less that you should wait hidden than that you should be immobile. Many have shot a hare for few that have shot a roe, and the many must have noticed with surprise, again and again, how confidently a hare will come galloping towards you, even



ALONG THE BURN BANKS.

on a bare field, provided you stand absolutely motionless. The instant you make the slightest movement he is away like a flash. With the roedeer it is much the same. The driven creatures, no doubt, have all their attention concentrated on the noise behind. Moreover, their eyes are not set, like our eyes, to look straight before them, but on either side. Therefore, if the object in front be motionless, they seem to approach it without notice; but if an arm be lifted or a foot shifted their notice is caught at once, they focus the suspicious object with their keen sight, and are away the moment the danger is realised. A great aid to concealment is any kind of background, so that the waiting figure does not stand out boldly silhouetted against the sky. Often when the stand is in a bushy place it will be needful to fire quickly, and therefore, when WAITING FOR THE ROE, it is well to hold the gun in such a position that it can be brought quickly to the shoulder without too many and too complex movements of the arms, such as would attract the quarry's notice. There is no more attractive form of sport in the writer's humble judgment than roedeer shooting. The roe lives in the woods and coverts, ALONG THE BURN BANKS in the strips of alder, birch, or other growth that so often fringes them, among the dense pines, anywhere, in fact, where they can find good cover, and a mighty deal of mischief they do the young covert, by the same token, loving the crisp juicy young shoots. But all these are very beautiful places, in those Scottish counties that are the roe's



CARRIED IN TRIUMPH.

most common resort. As you stand waiting, with that immobility that is so essential, you have all the fascination of an unknown prospect before you—you do not know what may be coming. Your chief hope, perhaps, is for roe, but it may be a blackcock, or these dwell in the places affected by the roe, or it may be a great capercaillie, if you are in the country of the "caper," in the pine woods. And, whatever Fauna may send you, Flora and Demeter will not fail to show you rare beauties. There is a peculiar fascination in standing thus motionless and wondering what wild things may be watching you and wondering at you with myriads, perhaps, of unseen yet keen and anxious eyes. Very fascinating, too, if you can get a glimpse at some creature that has not suspected you, and can study its ways. How often, comparatively, do the creatures, unsuspected, watch you as you go through the wood?

Then the roe comes, sometimes stealing along as if it hoped to elude observation, sometimes dashing in graceful terror, frankly trusting to its speed to let it escape. You fire, and there is almost a sense of surprise to find comparatively so large a creature fall so easily to your humble shot-gun. The roe, indeed, will die quite as easily as a hare, and no sooner have you killed him than the joy of sport is half stifled beneath regrets for the beauty of the thing killed, so graceful and so helpless. But he has eaten a deal of your best young covert, and, again, there is the argument that his own flesh will not be amiss for your eating. Especially is young roedeer liver to be commended.



THE HILL PONIES.

The actual shooting of the roe is perhaps the least interesting and attractive part of roedeer shooting. The waiting, and the coming of the blackcock, or of the "caper," or whatever it may be, all is better than the mere death of the roe, though that is the motive of the whole business.

We had gone up to the beat in the morning with THE HILL PONIES, but their services were not needed to bring the quarry home, and his corpse was CARRIED IN TRIUMPH between two of the beaters.

The same day that we took these photographs of the roedeer shooting and its environments, we had, by the way, a good illustration of the increased smokiness in recent years of so-called SMOKELESS POWDER. It might be the smoke of volley firing that comes from this one discharge of the smokeless cartridge.

The roe has its domestic virtues. Unlike some of its kind, it is the faithful husband of one wife, chosen for life. They are said to be hard to tame, and when half-tamed have a way of tossing their heads that is really rather dangerous, for the wound of a roe's horns—which are worn only by the buck—is no less poisonous than the wound of every stag's horn. In some states of condition and "velvet" it is more dangerous than others, and the wound is never a clean one. The bucks get very combative when two are wooing the same lady.

Yet we have seen them tame enough, and there are many who will call to mind the ancient story of a certain sportsman, an indifferent shot, who was much elated by two roedeer that had fallen to his gun in course of the day's sport, until his elation was rather checked by a remark of the keeper's as they wended home, "I should na' say too muckle



SMOKELESS POWDER.

about they twa roedeer, ye ken. For they're just twa tame yuns that eats out of the leddies' haun's."

Poor things! they would eat out of the ladies' hands no more. But what would be the reception, on his home-coming, of that gallant sportsman, at the "leddies' haun's"?

Our Portrait Illustration.

MISS MARGUERITE DARELL, whose portrait adorns our front page this week, is the third daughter of Sir Lionel Darell, fifth Baronet. Miss Darell is well known as an amateur violinist. The family seat is Fretherne Court, Gloucestershire.



IT cannot be too often repeated that the Spring Handicaps, and for that matter the Grand National too, are a matter of condition much more than of weight. Directly the weights are published we turn our minds to a horse's past performances, and, considering the weight assigned to him, estimate his chances. As a matter of fact, although weight on the flat is of course a matter of the greatest importance, it is of less consequence than condition early in the season. Later on, of course, horses are all more or less fit. But, however lightly weighted, no unfit horse can gallop a mile at racing pace in good company. The pace and the distance choke him off. Therefore early in the year those animals that promise to come to hand quickly are more likely to give the winner. Thus horses are more likely to win the Lincoln than colts, as the older horses can give away weight more easily at that time of year than later. Those who study racing, apart from betting, will be able to form their opinion by watching the records of work done, and, other things being equal, always favour the chance of the horses which trainers are not afraid to send along. Certainly this year it is among the top weights that we look most confidently for the winner. Readers of COUNTRY LIFE are probably not heavy bettors, but if anyone does like to have a "bit on," what I have said above points to patience. When the numbers go up is time enough to put our money on. The market as quoted is a weak one, and the prices probably false ones. The frost, of course, will interfere with work a good deal, even where the gallops are available. The weather favours sound horses, and, therefore, narrows our limit of choice. No horse has done better work than Sir Geoffrey, but looking back over his past I cannot persuade myself that he will stay the distance. Survivor is one of those disappointing horses that never will win when they are expected to do so. But now that he is in Waugh's hands I should not be altogether surprised if the Lincolnshire proved to be his journey. A great many men have expressed to me a fancy for Wantage, but I always distrust horses with tempers. What we call temper in horses is as often as not nervousness. Whether Mr. Lambton and a new stable will have succeeded in removing this I do not know, but if he goes kindly the Duke of Portland's horse has an undoubted chance. Yet horses with tempers are seldom thoroughly game. Readers of racing history will note how seldom a really great horse has been bad tempered, but, on the contrary, like Isinglass, Ormonde, or Flying Fox, they are of easy tempers. Damocles is a horse I should fancy if I were sure that he is being prepared for the race, but I am not. Gerolstein is still at work. As soon as the frost leaves us we shall be able to see how things are going. The Grand National is much more easy to write about. Since his win the other day Drogheda has become first favourite, and rightly, the dash he galloped with and the turn of speed that he showed being all in his favour. He can get over the course, as he has already shown, and considering the class of the rest he ought to be able to give away the weight. Mr. Bulteel's horse may not win; there are many chances in chasing, but no one would pick out a better chance on paper. Ambush II., I still think, has a poor chance. In spite of the excuses made, he did not make much of a show behind General Peace. He was outpaced and seemed slow at his fences. No doubt a win for the Prince of Wales would be popular, but it will not be this year. The "man in the street" is full of Tipperary Boy and his chance, and some small sums have been invested on him. Should the frost last it will be all in favour of the Irish-trained horses, for they are likely to be less interfered with by the bad weather. Elliman's chance cannot be improved by the accident he met with, and he will give Mr. Marsh trouble to get him ready. But he is comfortably weighted, and has been over the Aintree course, so we know that he can jump, and, as he finished strongly, he can stay. If he comes out sound and well we might see Mr. Blyth win a Grand National. It was rather unlucky that just as Leicester and Sandown Park promised a slight improvement in the sport under Grand National Rules the frost should come and stop it. Leicester is always a pleasant meeting, so many hunting men spare a day for racing, and one can always combine a gallop with Mr. Fernie or the Quorn with the sterner business of the race-course. There are many friends to be seen there. Everyone interested in steeplechasing should read Captain Powell's pertinent article on the needless intricacy of the Grand National entry forms in this month's *Baily*. It is the soundest common-sense. The *Badminton* article on American jockeys is interesting, though I confess I do not agree with much of it. To my mind no horseman who cannot finish is really a good rider, and it is acknowledged that when it comes to a close finish the Americans cannot hold their own. At the same time, the Americans have taught our riders something. They know how to make a pace, and they have not the foolish fancy for short heads, which was a too often imitated weakness of Fred Archer's, and lost him many a race. Who was the old trainer (you will find the story in the "Druid Series") who exclaimed, "None of your close finishes; they add yearly to a man's life"? At all events he was right. Lastly, we have the Grand National Hunt Committee making rules for point-to-point races. I am not particularly attached to these latter meetings, they are neither hunting nor steeplechasing, but I agree with "Borderer" that they will not be improved by

tinkering at them by outside authorities. If Masters of Hounds find them useful and popular, let them manage them in their own way. In the early thirties "Nimrod" wrote against steeplechasing in the Midland towns, when steeplechasing was more like point-to-point racing is now, than our gate-money £50 selling competitions for stale flat racers, and I think what he said then applies now. But, if point-to-point races are to prosper, the M.F.H.'s Association are the right people to manage them.

VEDETTE.



ABSOLUTELY the right thing to write would be, in the manner of Mr. *Punch*, "Literary news none, journalistic some." The position just now is simply this. A few literary men, of whom Dr. Conan Doyle is far and away the best example, are going up to the front. Dr. Conan Doyle is really going up in the very best way. He is no bad man of letters, but he is a surgeon too. Men of letters can do very little in the present emergency, but men of surgery can do a good deal; and he is going as a man of surgery, not as a man of letters. He will receive very little in return, except the esteem of his fellow-countrymen. But he will receive that in full measure, and he will have his reward.

Journalistic news, on the other hand, there is some. Other things being equal, there could be no worse time for starting a new newspaper than the time of war. Yet, as a matter of fact, there are new journals everywhere. It is not merely a case of the *Sphere*, which is a good thing, or of the *Spear*, which is beneath contempt, but there are daily papers, and those of the cheapest, which are being started also. Manchester has its halfpenny daily, or perhaps two, brought into being within the last fortnight. London is in the same position. Mr. C. Arthur Pearson (not Limited, but simply Mr. Pearson) is going to bring out a new halfpenny morning paper. To be candid, the "Looker-on" wishes him more than a common measure of success; and for many reasons. At present there are three morning papers at that absurd price. One of them the *Morning Leader*, is hardly known; another, the *Daily Mail*, is known far too ill or far too well. It has fallen of late into the vice which the American cousin describes, roughly but clearly, as "slopping over." It has gone mad over the war and self-advertisement. For this reason, if for none other, a new morning paper, which may perhaps be sane, is welcome, and more than welcome.

A little time ago I had the pain of calling attention in this column to the fact that Mr. Kipling's "Absent-minded Beggar" was about as nearly as could be the worst piece of verse that ever was written by a versifier of any distinction, and that Mr. W. E. Henley's "England, my England!" was about the best thing of the kind, although, as a matter of fact, it was written long ago. In these circumstances it is particularly pleasant to be able to announce that "England, my England!" has been set to music by Mr. Ernest A. Dicks, and can be bought from Messrs. J. Curwen and Sons. The music I have not read; but I have read, and learned off by heart and quoted without difficulty, the words. And they are superb.

The *Academy* is for ever inventing strange and interesting notions, and the last of them is the rediscovery of obsolete words. The worst of it is that the average man knows the half of them. Here is a sample out of which a correspondent of the *Academy* has made an ingenious paragraph. My complaint is that the words, with the exception of those which are italicised, have been familiar to me since childhood. Here they are:

Cote ...	...	Enclosure, shelter.
Thole ...	...	Suffer, endure.
Rede ...	...	Counsel, advice.
Blea ...	...	Complexion, aspect.
Dwine ...	...	To fade gradually.
Pleach ...	...	Interwine.
Inwit ...	...	Intuitive knowledge.
Outwit ...	...	Acquired knowledge.
Buxom ...	...	"Willing," good-natured.
Ruly ...	...	Taking kindly to discipline.
Fay ...	...	For fairy (which is incorrectly used).
Kitting ...	...	For kitten (a pure English diminutive instead of a hybrid form)
Calenture ...	...	Feverish heat.
Gyre ...	...	Circular course.
Spoon ...	...	To run before the wind.
Stour ...	...	Battle.
Leman ...	...	Mistress.
Rood ...	...	The Cross.

Now look at these words: "Cote" I have known always, perhaps partly because the Welsh word "cwt" means exactly the same thing; "Thole" I learned from the kailyard school, whom not to know is to be oneself unknown; "Rede" is good Chaucer; "Pleach" is common or garden provincial English, and means a great deal more than the interpretation suggests, for it involves the idea of laying branches flat as well as intertwining them. "Buxom," again—surely the description is inadequate. The word is quite old English, but it certainly conveys an idea of figure no less than of mere temperament. "Calenture," again, is merely a medical term; and as to "Leman"—well, everybody knows what it means; and the same observation applies to "Rood." In effect, these are quite good words, many of which might be used now with great advantage, but they are by no means obsolete.

"Debrett's Peerage for 1900" is as up-to-date, as complete, and as indispensable as a book of reference as ever. But, in my experience, it is useful not merely as a serious book of reference but also as a promoter of conversation. Little points are always turning up in casual talk as to which opinions differ, questions of age, of pedigree, and the like. In more cases than one would think, so great is the number of collaterals, Debrett puts an end to the argument. Then it contains, as usual, an analysis of peerages and

baronetries, new and extinct, in the preface, and a notice that the Society of Baronets have decided, *inter alia*, that the abbreviation "Bt." is to be preferred to that of "Bart.," hitherto more usually in vogue. It is no use, I suppose, but I raise my humble protest. "Bt." is the Army List abbreviation for "Brevet," and causes quite enough printer's errors as it is. I trust my few Baronet friends will forgive me if I address them—on envelopes, not personally—as "Barts." still. "Debrett's House of Commons and the Judicial Bench" is a useful companion volume, but in the preface is discernible the germ of an intention to make a crusade against "Arms of Assumption" and to insert for the future only such as may be proved to be of official heraldic authority. There should

thus be room for extra information without increased bulk in the volume of 1901.

Books to order from the library :

"The Unpublished Legends of Virgil." Collected by Charles Godfrey Leland. (Elliot Stock.)
 "Impressions of Spain." J. R. Lowell. (Putnam's.)
 "Among Horses in Russia." Captain Hayes. (Everett.)
 "Folly Corner." Mrs. H. E. Dudeney. (Heinemann.)
 "The Heart of the Dancer." Percy White. (Hutchinson.) LOOKER-ON.

THE ART OF EEL SHEARING.

THE eel has fallen from its high estate since the days in which His Most Gracious Majesty King George III. used to make a practice of proceeding to Twickenham by water in order to partake of the dish which has lent its name to Eel Pie Island. Nevertheless, huge quantities of eels are annually consumed in this country, a great number coming from Holland, where the somewhat brackish water of the canals imparts a flavour to them which is preferred by some people. Dutch eel boats are nearly always to be seen moored to London Bridge, a sole privilege which they have enjoyed since the reign of William III.

English eels, when nicely prepared, make a rich and savoury dish, especially if all those who partake have first had the pleasure and excitement of catching them. The ordinary method of doing this is by the well-known eel lines, a very poor sport, however, when compared with eel "shearing," "sticking," or "picking," as it is variously called in different parts of the country. The practice is, we believe, illegal on the Thames and during certain seasons of the year on the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, but in the Fen district and on the shallow marshy creeks of Essex it is freely indulged in.

The apparatus used in these latter localities consists, as will be seen from the first illustration, of a pole from 8ft. to 10ft. long, terminating in a broad flat wooden blade, to the end of which are affixed a number of hooks about 6in. long. A small flat-bottomed boat or punt is necessary, and is propelled, or more strictly speaking guided, by one occupant, while the other makes a series of vigorous plunges into the bed of the creek or stream with the shear. If an eel happens to be on the spot the force of the drive pushes its body up some distance between the hooks, and upon the shear being withdrawn it is naturally impaled upon the points. This, thanks to a lucky snap-shot, is clearly shown in the picture; and to give some idea of the rapidity of the exposure it may be mentioned that although the eel appears to be stiffened out, it was in reality twisting itself into a rapid series of knotted contortions at the moment the photograph was taken.

The force of the strokes with the shear is usually sufficient



IMPALED ON THE HOOKS.

to keep the boat under way, the second occupant's attention being devoted to steering with a scull, and, what is not altogether an easy matter, preventing the captured eels from "slithering" back into the water again.

It is not good for two inexperienced persons to go eel shearing together, as they are almost sure to upset their frail craft within a few minutes of starting operations. Although the danger of drowning is not great in such shallow water, the thick black mud at the bottom, in which the eel loves to wallow, will impart an odour to the clothes for weeks that not all the perfumes of Arabia will sweeten; therefore, let one of the twain be learned in the art.

At the end of a "stretch" of water, as shown in the second illustration, the punt may be manipulated by the shearer alone, and it is here that frequently the best sport is to be had. This is doubtless owing to the fact that the passage of the punt and the repeated plunging of the shear have driven the eels in this direction, until they find further progress barred. Before they have time to double on their track, "plunging" should be carried

on fast and furiously, and several captures are almost certain to result. Sometimes a second shear is carried, and the steersman joins in the fray at this point, but here great care is needed, as a too vigorous stroke may mean a capsize and loss of eels. In the little corner of water depicted here less than a quarter of an hour's shearing yielded ten good eels; while about three-quarters of an hour spent previously in working up the stretch had only yielded two.

One advantage that eel shearing has over fishing is that bait, tackle, lines, and other complicated gear are not required. The punt and shear are all that is necessary, and to transport the booty no elaborate fish basket is wanted. A smart blow just above the tail with a scull will cure the predilection of eels to wriggle, and they may then be threaded on a piece of string and easily carried. There is also the enjoyment of a meal of one's own catching to look forward to, which is more than the majority of fresh-water fishermen can anticipate.



WORKING UP THE STRETCH.



TEDDY S . . . VENTURE:

A BERKSHIRE . . . CHARACTER SKETCH.

IT was "betwixt haytime and harvest." The first bloom of the roses, the first rapturous blush of summer was past; in the meadows, shorn of their wavy crop, the grass was beginning to sprout again, to send up fresh shoots, succulent, juicy, emerald bright.

In the particular part of the world of which I write, however, meadows are few and far between, lying mostly along the streams, and they are compassed about with tall trees, so that on a hot July day they are perfect havens of deep shade and balmy coolness. Away from the brooks, the farms run into one another without so much as a hedge or a boundary-stone between them—green corn rubbing shoulders with pink clover, and sweet-flowering beans with blood-red sainfoin.

Over these wide stretches the south wind from the downs blows softly, ruffling swelling wheat-ears and setting all the gay young oats dancing. When tired of these pranks it wanders through the village to toss the hair of the children who loiter on the bridge and to play hide and seek with the fishes beneath the willows.

Old Teddy Watts stood at his back door and looked across his bit of garden to his orchard beyond the brook. "Bee—u—tiful day," he murmured, "'mazin' fine fur the carn an' the roo—uts. If on'y the Lard 'ud send we a drap o' rain nights or Sundays I'm a-thinkin' I could mebbe rise a second crop o' grass off that ther' orchard. Well, well, He be merciful, an' we must trust Him!" Teddy was a cripple, having lost one leg in an accident many years before my story opens; since then he had walked with crutches, and very strong they required to be now, for he was of generous proportions; sufficient, if rolled out, to make nearly two ordinary-sized men. When he laughed, which was often, his fat sides and pendulous chin shook to an extent quite alarming, while his eyes almost lost themselves in the ample folds of his cheeks. Teddy was a master in the art of "chopping," otherwise dealing, which he brought to a high pitch of perfection; he was also unrivalled at extracting the maximum of labour from those about him, while putting in the minimum himself, for his chief occupation consisted in standing at the back door propped on his crutches, or in driving over his little farm in the spring cart.

"'Ee dwun't never sim to think as arra body wants to set an' rest now an' again, or to take a walk an' 'ave a bit o' joyment," was the plaintive cry of his wife, who passed her time between the wash-tub, a small shop, the fowls, and the pig. "Wot hever thee'll do, Edmund, when I be took, an' thee has nought but what thee can scabble about arter, is more'n I can say."

"Thee needn't to fret thyself about ma; ther' be as good fish in the sea as iver comed out on't, an' if so be as 'twur 'tis the Lard's will to take 'ee afoorer me, 'tis more'n like as I could get ma another 'ooman."

"Ah! but not airt to put up wi' thy grizzlin's an' growlin's as I've a-done; to work marnin', noon, and night, an' hand 'ee over the brass as sweet as honey, an' not ax 'ee fur a penny to put in the bank; 'tisn't many as 'ud trate 'ee like that when all's said an' done."

This was Betsy's great grievance; she longed with her whole soul for an account, however small, in the Post Office Savings Bank. For years she had kept this end in view and striven to attain it; but Teddy, who scented money as a camel in the desert scents water, rigorously exacted every penny of her earnings from every source—shop, washing, or fowls—and hitherto she had not been able to lay by so much as a shilling in her own name. "What's thine's mine," quoted the old man, but he carefully forbore to reverse the axiom, struggle as Betsy might against the injustice. On this occasion he endeavoured to soothe her outraged feelings by an expedient which seldom failed. "Thee'st got a wunnerful good headpiece o' thine, missus, I'll say that for 'ee; wi' all thy faults, an' Lar' bless 'ee they be a-many! thee'st ter'ble sharp at choppin' an' dealin'. What do 'ee think now o' my buyin' another 'arse an' trap?"

To-day Betsy was not to be appeased with this palpable morsel of flattery. "I dwun't see no call for 'ee to get arra nother; thee's got one a'ready," she replied, acidly.

"Well, 'ee knows, 'tis this way; I've a-yearad as some

Lunnon folk be a-comin' down 'ere next wik—taken the vick'ridge fur a month, so 'um sez. Now, luk 'ee, townsfolk they allus likes to goo drivin' over the country, 'tis a change fur'n after them nasty dirty strits o' theirn, where you cassn't goo no pace, they be sa chockful o' waggings an' caerts. Thinks I, s'pwose these year people hires my noo trap a good few times; then, when they be gone, I sells it to parson—"

And here Teddy winked knowingly. "Wheer's the money comin' from to pay fur'n? Tell ma that, Edmund, if 'ee canst."

"Thee dwun't know everything, Betsy! Fur more'n a twel'month I've a-scope an' a-scope, an' 'twur on'y last wik as I got anuff—I solded some siraw to parson. Ah! I allus likes dealin' wi' parson; gumma one o' his sort, he's a gen'elman, he is, an' dwun't know the price o' nothink."

"Thee bist a lang-yedded chap an' no mistake," exclaimed his wife, with extorted admiration. "How much 'av 'ee in the bank, then?"

"A matter o'—"

"Drat that shop!" interpolated Betsy, as a knock was heard at the front door that opened on the street.

"Blessed if 'twurn't 'Ilder Ann fur a penn'orth o' tea, an' to ast if I'd plase to lend her mother a pin; 'tis on'y a wik come to-morrer—no, I be tellin' a lie, 'twur a wik 'issterday—as she borrowed a couple, an' she ain't returned 'em yet; but ther', some folks is that dishonest ther's no trustin' them wi' nothink." And Mrs. Watts returned to her wash-tub in an access of virtuous indignation.

"As I wur a-sayin'," continued Teddy, "I've a matter o' twen'y pound in the bank, and Muster Bartemer he 'ave an 'arse an' trap as he wants to sell—a wagglenet, or summat o' that, he calls 'un. But Muster Bartemer astes top price fur his things, he do. I dwun't mane no 'arm to the man, but I do wish as God A'mighty'd pick un up an' drap un down in a spiky place; mebbe then he 'udn't fancy 'isself quite sa much!"

Despite the unfavourable opinion he entertained of Master Bartemer, Teddy eventually sounded him as to the lowest price he would take for the coveted articles, and after an incredible amount of haggling and chaffering, a bargain was struck, by which the latter became the proud possessor of a "wagglenet that shucked about awful," as Betsy grimly remarked, and a gaunt quadruped called a horse, more remarkable for speed than points.

Meanwhile, the visitors from London had arrived, and Teddy lost no time in sending up to the parsonage to inform them that if they wanted a trap he would be happy to accommodate them. "An' tell 'em," he added, "that we shassn't quar'l about the price, fur I leaves that to their honour."

Mrs. Watts was hanging out her linen the following morning in the garden that lay along the stream, when she heard strange voices on the village bridge close by, and girlish laughter that floated across the water like a ripple of sweet music. A few minutes later there was a knock at the front door, and two people, a young man and a maiden, stepped in from the hot sunshine without. The latter was dressed in white, from the crown of her dainty sailor-hat to the tip of her small shoe; her eyes were dark, with thick curly lashes, and in the middle of each clear, pale cheek was a faint pink flush, just for all the world as if a petal from a La France rose had fallen there by accident, and, liking its soft resting-place, had made up its mind there to remain. Her companion was tall and straight, with close-cropped hair, and a certain quick, masterful way about him, except when he spoke to the young lady; then, as Betsy noticed, his voice "wur that saft airt 'ud think he wur talkin' to a babby."

"I believe you have a carriage that you let out on hire," he began, with a lordly air.

"Please, sir, you'd best speak to the master. Edmund, here's quality come about that wagglenet. Please to step this way, sir, fur my 'usban's a cripple an' goos hoppety-like," and Mrs. Watts, punctuating her speech with curtsies for commas, preceded the visitors into the garden, where they found the old man at the back door, propped on his crutches as usual.

After a short palaver as to the charge for the use of the

vehicle, the horse was put into the shafts by the united efforts of Teddy, his wife, and a small boy who was kept to do odd jobs, and the gentleman, helping his pretty cousin to the box-seat, mounted up beside her and drove away towards the vicarage with a flourish of the whip that excited the admiration of all beholders. A quarter of an hour later the cripple hopped into the shop, where his wife was engaged in counting out a half-pennyworth of marbles to a microscopic child.

"Betsy, Betsy!" he cried, while his fat cheeks quivered with excitement, "ther' be six on 'em!"

"Cassn't thee hold thy jaw a minnit?" she retorted, without pausing in her occupation. "Now," as the child departed, "what dost want wi' ma?"

"Ther' be six of 'em in the wagglenet—they two a-sweet-heartin' on the box, an' fower behindt; an' I only axed 'em five shillin'!"

"Thee bist an ole fool," was her unfeeling reply; "he said as a didn't mind what a paid. Thee med a-axed un double, an' he'd a-paid it wi'out grizzlin'."

"I'll have it out of un sum'ow, blessed if I wun't!" murmured Teddy, who was consumed for the rest of the day with unavailing regret.

For the next few weeks the waggonet was in constant requisition, and things went entirely to Mr. Watts's satisfaction; it is true that his prices, which appeared to be on an upward sliding scale, did not give the same to his customers; but then there was always some excellent reason why the last journey was rather more expensive than its predecessor. The road was bad, or the hills were steep, or the horse had been just out and could only be spared as a great favour.

"I begin to suspect that old fellow is not as simple as he looks," remarked the young captain, as he sauntered down the village with his cousin one sunny morning. "I will see if I cannot manage to circumvent him in some way or other, for his prices now are getting ruinous."

"And I always imagined country people were so honest!" exclaimed Eva. "How can they help being good in such a pretty place? The very children are angels. Look at them!" as a little girl, staggering under the weight of a baby nearly as large as herself, dropped a quaint curtsy to the "pretty lady," while another, yet smaller, with beautiful grey eyes, was seen instructing a tiny brother "to make his obedience to the quality." "Aren't they perfectly sweet, Jack?"

"Perfectly sweet and altogether lovely," replied Jack, emphatically; but he was not looking at the children.

Teddy was just about to be hoisted into the cart when the two young people arrived on the scene.

"We want the carriage this afternoon, and we will take it by the hour. What will your charge be?" enquired the captain.

"Plase to wait, sir, till we've got un up; 'tis a rare job, fur he be ter'ble heavy," and Betsy panted with her exertions, while "odd jobs" looked overwhelmed by the responsibility of assisting to elevate his master.

Once safely landed in the cart, Mr. Watts was at liberty to consider the important question just propounded. He pondered a while in silence. "Well, sir," he replied, after an elaborate mental calculation, "I mos'n gen'ly lets it out by the distance, so to spake, but to obbligate you, as you've had un a good few times, I'll mek an expectation, an' let you have it fur three shillin' an hour."

"Very good, we will come and fetch it at three o'clock," said the young man; and the two took their departure, returning by the path through the fields that skirt the stream, where are many shady nooks among the trees, and soft mossy banks inviting dalliance, and where the ripple of the water over the stones is plainly to be heard by an ear attuned singing, "I love you, sweet, I love you!"

That night old Teddy's mind was troubled, and his sleep went from him. Never had he been worsted in a bargain before, and to think that a mere Lunnon chap had proved the better man was gall and wormwood to his soul. When Captain Jack went down the following morning to pay for the carriage he was received with plaintive, even tearful, reproaches.

"You had the trap fur an hour—that's three shillin'; ther' were six on yer, an' you druv to Wanting, fur a man telled me as saw you ther'. Wanting be fower mile ther', an' fower mile back—that be eight mile. Six on yer! eight mile! three shillin'! why, taint a penny a mile a-piece! Oh, 'tis crool work, crool work! The old 'oomans as goes to markut all scrunched up in a common cart pays more nor that. To think o' you Lunnon folk a-comin' down year a-ridin' in my wagglenet, a-drivin' my 'arse, that cost ma such a comenjus lot o' money, an' on'y payin' sixpence a-piece fur eight mile! It meks I sweat, it do; it meks I trimble to think on't," and two large tears rolled slowly down his fat cheeks.

The end of the matter was that a compromise was effected whereby fixed prices were substituted for a sliding scale, and before the interview terminated Teddy's ample round face was beaming like an amiable full moon.

"The young gen'elman sez as they be all a-gwine away

purty soon," he remarked to his wife; "they've just about 'joyed theirselves down year, an' he talls ma it's more'n like as he'll bring the young lady agen next summer, an' have some mooer drives; but I dwun't know as I shall be able to 'blige un then."

"I reckon them two's a-thinkin' o' gettin' wed," put in Betsy, who, woman like, scented a romance; "an' he med goo furdur an' fare wuss, for she's a sweet purty cratur. Lor' bless me, dwun't he jest dote on her! Well, well, that's wot 'tis to be young. Thee medst a fuss wi' me onst, Edmun'."

"Thee wur never much to look at, Betsy; nob'dy could say as I wed thee fur thy looks, my gal. I be a-gwine to church a-Sunday; 'tis a 'mazin' long time since I've a-bin—nigh on fower 'ears—but I manes to 'tend reg'lar when parson comes back."

Mrs. Watts turned and gazed at her husband with genuine concern. "Thee doesn't feel thyself bad no'ers, dost Edmun', that thee talks o' gwine to church?"

"Noa, Lard love 'ee! I be as well as ever I wur in my life, but 'tis this way, luk 'ee. Parson wants to buy an 'arse an' trap; I wants to sell ourn, so we med as well have a deal together. I allus likes sellin' to parson, an' it meks a man feel comferble like to goo to church now an' agen, 'specially if you've arra thing to sell to parson."

Thereafter was witnessed the edifying sight of Teddy hopping down to church each Sunday evening, and stopping in the churchyard after service to exchange greetings with the parson's wife, to whom he confided that "the sarmint had hit 'im 'ard, an' jest about med un shuckit an' trimble."

I have said that the Watts's garden lay alongside the brook which divided it from the orchard; between the two a narrow plank was stretched across the stream. The old man, who frequently went over to feast his eyes with the spectacle of the gaunt quadruped feeding under the fruit trees, was on the frail bridge one morning, when either his crutch slipped or he became giddy—he was never quite clear how the accident happened—and he fell prone on his face in the water and soft mud below. Owing to his lameness he was unable to move, and the mud that filled his mouth prevented his calling for help. Happily for him, however, "odd jobs" had seen the catastrophe, and quickly raised the cry that "Maester were a-laying on his stummick in the bruck, a-drownding."

In a few minutes six or seven women and a couple of men appeared on the scene, and after much heaving, struggling, and hauling, they succeeded in conveying him to land, "drippin' like an old yow"—i.e., ewe—as one of the rescuers remarked. Between them the women removed his wet garments, for Betsy was too much upset to be of any assistance, and he was put to bed to recover from the shock and the immersion. "Ah, that did mek I feel bad," he said, when sufficiently convalescent to indulge in a gossip with the neighbours; "I wur frightened an' no mistake; thinks I, I be drowned an' suffocated fur sure, 'cause, luk 'ee, I couldn't move me, hand nor fut; but the Lard wur merciful an' p'served ma; 'tis a mussy as I'd a-bin to church lately."

"'Tis all along o' that dratted 'arse," quoth Betsy, wrathfully; "thee didn't never goo across to look at 'tother un; a noo broom swapes clane, but when it's a scrub there's a job. Thee'll have the brantits fur thy pains, mark my words now."

She proved a true prophet. Teddy was laid up for some weeks with his old enemy—bronchitis—and during that time Betsy resolved upon a deed of derring-do at which she has not yet ceased to wonder. She determined to revolt once and for all, and not only refused to hand over her earnings intact to her exacting lord and master, but further took upon herself to make away with the obnoxious horse and carriage, the purchase of which she had never approved.

She did not intend, however, to sell it to the parson, who had been assiduous in his attentions to her husband during the latter's illness.

"I ben't a-gwine to ax 'ee to buy un," she said to herself; "parson have anuff to do wi' his brass, wi'out wastin' it on a rattle-trap an' a bag o' boans. I wur barned an' bred up in church when all's said an' done, an' I hopes, plase God, to be car'd there when I'm dead, though tisin't much as I goes now. I've a-yearad as them Methody folk at the manor wants summat to get about the country in, an' their money's as good as arra body's, I s'pwose."

So Betsy, who was a churchwoman in her peculiar way, disposed of the "wagglenet" and the horse on her own responsibility. What she received for the articles in question is shrouded in mystery to this day; she handed over to her husband the sum of twenty-one pounds, with the remark that he "med think hisself lucky that his venter hadn't turned out no wuss, fur he'd made a matter o' twen'y shillin' on the deal, besides the hire to the Lunnon folk." Beyond this she vouchsafed no information, and Teddy's most strenuous efforts failed to elicit what she had actually received. This reticence, coupled with the fact, which he shortly afterwards discovered, that she had opened an account in the Post Office Savings Bank, aroused the darkest suspicions within his breast, and it is remarked by his intimates that this is the only one of his numerous "ventures" on which he maintains a profound and melancholy silence. ELEANOR G. HAYDEN.

ULTIMA THULE.—I.

IT is likely that most people take such knowledge as they have of the Shetland Islands from the pages of Sir Walter Scott's "Pirate." It is very fascinating, and gives a vivid picture of times that were, no doubt, something like what he recalls, but they neither give nor purport to give any picture of the Shetland Islands of to-day. A very superficial comparison of the introduction written by Sir Walter Scott himself with the body of the narrative is enough to show this very clearly, for in the former we are in the days of Lighthouse Commissioners, in the latter at the end of the seventeenth century,

not so very far removed from the manners that are depicted in the Sagas. A touch of adventure was actually given to the voyage that the great novelist took in the Northern Lighthouse Commissioners' yacht by a suspicion that a vessel seen in the distance was an American "cruiser," and, consequently, an object to be feared; but this occurred no nearer Shetland than the Hebrides, and they never made any close acquaintance with the suspicious ship. Perhaps the point at which the description in the "Pirate" touches most nearly the Shetlands of to-day is the account of the whale fishing, which, it is to be feared, is conducted in a most barbarously wasteful and destructive manner, even now, whenever a "school" of these great beasts has the misfortune to find itself within the jaws of any of those narrow "voes" or firths with which the coast is indented, so as to give the islanders an opportunity of heading them off from



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B. A NOBLE HORNED SPECIMEN.

Copyright

the open sea and driving them ashore on the shallows. The novelist has used all his art to create an atmosphere for his story that has peculiar romantic charm. There is everywhere a majesty of seascape and landscape, of tremendous headlands and tremendous billows. The story moves in a world of vivid adventure and of storm. Nevertheless, it is not a little probable that the visitor who comes to the Shetland Islands from the main coast of Scotland may be struck with a sense of disappointment at the general aspect of the islands. Sir Walter Scott came up by way of the East Coast, past the Orkneys, and so to the

Shetlands, or Zetland as he writes of it. That is, no doubt, the way to go if this sense of disappointment is to be avoided. Up the East Coast of Scotland the scenery is of no peculiar majesty, the seaward cliffs are in no way remarkable, and though the beauty of some of the firths, such as those of Tay, of Moray, and of Dornoch, which the yachtsman is likely to visit on the way up, is very striking, there is nothing by which the Northern islands must necessarily suffer in comparison. The Orkneys, which he will inevitably take *en route*, are for the most part low and not very interesting islands, the fine monolith-like rock called the "Old Man of Hoy" and the curious cathedral at Kirkwall being veritable exceptions, so that all such majesty of cliff scenery as the Shetlands are able to show he is fully ready to appreciate. It is quite otherwise, however, in the case of a visitor who approaches them, as happened to the present writer, from



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

SHELTIES.

Copyright

the West Coast of Scotland, rounding Cape Wrath, and so coming along the North Coast of the mainland to the Pentland Firth. All up that West Coast the scenery is peculiarly beautiful and noble, and after rounding Cape Wrath the landward view is of a perpetual chain of hills, with jagged peaks silhouetted blackly out from that point of view, owing to the circumstance that the sun is more or less directly behind them during most of the day. Coming from such a voyage as this, the first view of either the Orkneys or the Shetlands strikes the eye with an undeniable effect of disappointment.

After all it is a little hard to say why one expected so much. It is a land of romance, of legend, of Sagas, of krakens, of Norsemen. It is not so many years since Norse was the accepted tongue of the people, and even now the popular dialect of the Shetlanders has more that is akin to Norwegian than any other tongue. They do not seem to have the Gaelic, but, for all that, books that claim to be written in the Shetland dialect are unintelligible to the Southern comprehension—to the intelligence of this Southerner at all events.

It appears that most of these Shetland Islands owe their conformation to the fact that the Atlantic is perpetually battering and crashing away on their western sides, while the forces of the ocean are comparatively gentle from the east. It

cliffs of Shetland rushes up them to a height that I have never seen equalled anywhere else, unless it be on those Spanish cliffs, also facing the eastward roll of the Atlantic, just a little south of Cape Finisterre.

In spite of all its grand and terrific seascape, it is not first of all with the sea, curiously enough, that Shetland is associated. The name recalls, after Sir Walter Scott's "Pirate," ponies and shawls. "Shetland! Oh, yes, where the wool comes from," is the kind of mental note that the name strikes. It is a bit doubtful whether all that is sold as Shetland wool has ever been to Shetland; neither is it certain that all that is called wool has ever been worn by a sheep, for a deal is, no doubt, done in iniquitous fashion with stuff called flannelette and the like; but, in a broad way of speaking, it may be said that wool generally implies sheep, and Shetland wool Shetland sheep. It is more charitable to judge wool to be "a' 'oo'," according to the phraseology of Dean Ramsay's excellent story, until it is convicted of cotton.

So that Shetland, with its magnificent sea cliffs, yet recalls to us, at first, something rather of a peaceful and pastoral nature, in the persons of these sheep. You may often see A NOBLE HORNED SPECIMEN that has a braver look than the mutton of the Southdown, a wilder and a gamier aspect, suggesting an approach to the more or less original type of



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

GOING TO MARKET.

Copyright

is chiefly on the western side that the precipitous cliffs go sheer down, and the land is cut in voes or firths, so that, as the accepted saying goes, there is no part of the islands farther than three miles from the sea. There is scarce anywhere that you will see the ocean in greater might than on the West Coasts of the Shetland Islands. In one of Louis Stevenson's letters, lately published, there is a fine description of a billow's dash, though this was a record of an impression he got in a storm at Wick, as I understand it, a place not so very far from the Shetlands, though by no means so open to the roll of the Atlantic.

It is curious, by the by, that Louis Stevenson went almost the identical trip that Scott made with Louis Stevenson's own grandfather, as already narrated, in the ship of the Commissioners of Northern Lights (not the Aurora borealis), and took some material for his "Kidnapped," by the way. The description runs: "The thunder at the wall when it first struck" (it was beating on a shingly beach and a pier), "the rush along, ever growing higher, the great jet of snow-white spray some forty feet above you, and 'the noise of many waters,' the roar, the hiss, the 'shrieking' among the shingle as it fell head over heels at your feet. I watched it if it threw the big stones at the wall, but it never moved them."

The sea after crashing at the base of some of these sheer

the Ovis Poli. They are indeed gallant cliff climbers, these sheep of the soft fleeces, and the pastoral and the seascape strike one as being in very curious apposition when one sees a flock of these Shetland sheep on the cliffs. We know, of course, well enough, if we begin to think about it, that the sheep and the goats are first cousins, in spite of the great gulf that a spiritual analogy seems to have placed between them, and that they are sure-footed as the chamois itself; but somehow we do not connect them in our minds (for we do not often begin to think) with the rocky homes of their original habitat, but rather with lush water meadows by the gliding rivers of Southern England. That is the price the sheep pays for his fat inglorious life.

Moreover, and in the same surroundings, you will see droves of the little ponies—SHELTIES—with wild tails and unkempt manes, browsing on the cliff heads, or shepherded, by a dog scarcely less than themselves, along the road, if they be going to fair or to shipment. For there is much shipment of these little fellows to England for work in the mines, poor little chaps, and also for use as children's ponies. The finest herd on the mainland, Lord Londonderry's, has lately been broken up, and now, perhaps, Lord Hopetoun and his sisters have the best that are to be shown. We have given pictures of these exiles in former numbers of COUNTRY LIFE. The ponies seem to increase

in height and substance as they come South and get the more generous pasture, but for wiry ability of work and weight-pulling, those fat fellows of the South, probably, will not match the Shelties in their native islands, where one of them will gladly drag a whole family to market, and be none the worse.



THE BEST LATE APPLES.

SOME wise words are written by a friend relating to late Apples. He considers that rich colour does not atone for a fruit of mealy, flavourless quality, and, speaking of some varieties exhibited in January, mentions that, except for two or three, all should have been consumed in December. Exactly so. It is not Apples that preserve their bright-coloured cheeks for many months that the English public desires, but good winter Apples—fruits that ripen at this season *naturally*. This fruit grower continues: Those who desire good juicy Apples now and for the next two months should, for cooking, secure Prince Albert, Hornead Pearmain, Newton Wonder, Northern Greening, Wellington, and Norfolk Beaufin. No better half-dozen Apples exist than these, and it is important for beginners in fruit culture to remember this. All are good, Prince Albert and Wellington especially so. Many fruits that in January and February are firm and tempting, when tasted are mealy and flavourless. When the season of a certain fruit is over, other varieties should grace the table or satisfy the cook. Having written of the kitchen Apples, our correspondent then refers to dessert fruits: "Of eating Apples esteemed for their lateness, that delicious variety, Cox's Orange Pippin, when allowed to hang late and kept in a cool place, is excellent until quite the end of January." This is true. We have lately tasted some fruit as rich and firm as any Apple gathered in the autumn. "To follow this none is better than Cockle Pippin; it has a good crisp flesh. Adams' Pearmain and Mannington Pearmain will keep good until the end of February generally, and Rosemary Russet, Brownlee's Russet, Duke of Devonshire, and Sturmer Pippin are ample for the latest table supply." This selection of late cooking and dessert Apples is important. At this season late fruit is enjoyable, because there are few other fruits available, and these in some households are too expensive to make free use of. Nothing is more wholesome and nutritious than a good English Apple, or more easily obtained when the proper varieties are grown. But Apples merely kept until they are as mealy as over-ripe Pears are neither pleasant nor satisfying.

THE WHITE JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE.

This is a decided advance on the old, well-known coloured-rooted kind, and in seasons like the present, when good white turnips are very small and scarce, owing to the long protracted drought, the White Jerusalem Artichoke is doubly welcome. Those who have not yet given it a trial should do so without delay, and, we may add, give it good culture too, for, as a rule, anywhere in an out-of-the-way corner is considered suitable for Artichokes. Owing to their strong rooting nature, one is sure to get plenty of them, but the great thing is to get not only plenty of tubers, but also fine, large, and even-shaped ones, and in this respect the white variety is far superior to the old coloured one. Select smooth, even medium-sized, tubers, and plant in rows 2 ft. apart each way, and very little in the way of culture will be needed, for the tops grow so strongly that weeds have little chance of making headway during the summer. As the tubers should be used freshly dug from the soil, the best plan is to cover them over with litter to keep frost from making it difficult to get them out in all sorts of weather. If the soil be good, a large plot will not be necessary to supply a family, for the yield is enormous.

"GARDEN LAWNS, TENNIS LAWNS, CRICKET GROUNDS, ETC."

This is a useful and daintily-got-up book, issued by Messrs. Sutton and Sons, and published by Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, and Co. (price 2s. 6d.) It is printed upon good paper, and illustrated with many charming views of garden lawns, which show how beautiful is a rich velvety sward with flowering trees and shrubs grouped upon its outskirts. The information is clearly set out in plain, simple language, such as the following extract shows: "Grass seeds may be sown at any time between the middle of March and the end of September. But from the latter half of May on to about August 10th hot dry

weather often proves destructive to the young plants. They cannot acquire sufficient stamina to endure continued drought or fierce heat unless constant watering is possible, and it is not conducive to sweet temper to see a good plant wither away. From the middle of March to the first week of May is the best period for spring sowing, the earlier the better, and from about August 10th to the middle of September for summer or autumn sowing. The clovers from an autumn sowing are liable to destruction by a severe winter, even if slugs spare them. Should there be failure from any cause, seed must be sown in the following spring. The seeds can be more evenly distributed by two sowings than by one, however skilful and practised the sower may be; and the second sowing should cross the first at right angles. The finer grass seeds, being small and light, are readily blown to a distance by a high wind; a quiet time should therefore be chosen, and the workman must keep his hand low. . . . After the seed is sown the whole plot must be raked once more, with the object of slightly covering as many seeds as possible. Those which are deeply buried will not germinate, and those which are exposed may be scorched by the sun or consumed by birds. As a finish, put the roller over twice, crossing the land, and it must be done carefully, for on every spot raised by the roller the grasses will fail. Good work will leave the surface as smooth and true as a billiard table." This is sound practical advice.

A NEW SNOWDROP.

A new Snowdrop which is exciting considerable interest at this time is *Galanthus Elwesii* var. *Whittallii*. It was shown by Messrs. Barr and Sons at a recent meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society, and is evidently a very early variety. Judging from the potful exhibited it will form a delightful pot plant, the stems standing up boldly; indeed, the whole plant is bold, broad in foliage, and with large globular pure white flowers. It is taller, more robust, and has broader leaves than *G. Elwesii*. Mr. Whittall of Smyrna introduced it.

WOODLAND PRIMROSES.

"J. G." sends the following interesting note relating to the Primrose, but forgets to mention that the beautiful bunch-flowered and Munstead Primroses are precious flowers in the woodland garden, flowers of strong and refined colours, produced upon plants of vigorous growth: "Few native flowers are held in such favour as the common Woodland Primrose, and very beautiful effects are produced by planting it in quantity on the margins of shrubberies or under the partial shade of lofty deciduous trees, where the grass grows thinly and where the mowing machine does not come into use. At this period of the year many thousands of roots are dug up by the tramping class of flower-root hawkers, who make a precarious living by rooting up Ferns or flowering plants of any kind and disposing of them to suburban garden owners. The Primrose is one of the best of all to withstand the change, for if lifted with even a small ball of roots and soil it takes no harm from the change in its surroundings, and flowers just as freely as in its native haunts. In Hampshire the supply is inexhaustible, for the amount of wild woodland or uncultivated land is very large, and on railway embankments, especially in the neighbourhood of Botley, the great Strawberry gardens of the South of England, the bank on either side of the South-Western line is a study for any lover of Nature, for the banks are thinly covered with graceful Birch trees that have sprung up naturally, and the soil beneath is thickly carpeted with Primroses, interspersed with wild Hyacinths or Bluebells, and before these are on the wane the towering spikes of Foxgloves are seen pushing up, and they are enough to make anyone envy natural gardening on a large scale, for one's puny attempts to make Foxgloves in a garden look like these do by the acre is impossible. Those who grow the Primrose in gardens cannot do better than copy Nature. When the plants have finished blooming, they die down and go to rest under the cool shade of the Brake Fern fronds that spring up and cover the early blooming bulbs and plants, and even in their decay form one of the best of all winter coverings. The covering is light and holds the dry leaves in its embrace, and yet decays and forms a top dressing for the roots in spring." Digging up native plants for the garden and in this way spoiling the natural beauty of woodland and field should be made a criminal offence. Many species have become extinct through this pernicious practice. Ardent lovers of our beautiful flora who wish for specimens in their gardens try and obtain some seed on a plant, not ruthlessly digging up whole colonies. The way to establish the Primrose in gardens is not by stealing plants from wayside bank and copse, but by seed, which is very easily raised in June in the open garden or in a frame. Many owners of large estates who from kind motives have permitted public access to them, have closed them because of wanton destruction to the flora.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We are always pleased to assist our readers in matters of difficulty concerning the garden. We are also in touch with many first-class gardeners, and shall be happy to recommend one to any who may require the services of a reliable man.

COUNTRY HOUSE DAIRIES.—II.

OUTLINES OF MANAGEMENT.

ONCE having chosen the breed, the next thing is to select the cows themselves. It is hardly necessary to say that the would-be owner without experience should *never* buy in the open market or fair, or from any dealer who is not absolutely above suspicion. He may get an experienced friend to choose for him, or to accompany him to a sale of a good herd. Sometimes great bargains are to be had, but there is a charming degree of excitement and uncertainty about this method, and in the heat of the moment he may buy something unsuitable. Or he may go to a trustworthy breeder stating what he wants and what he is willing to pay for it; this last plan has considerable advantages, for in buying from a pedigree herd the purchaser, however inexperienced, has the different animals' qualifications ready set down in black and white for anyone with common-sense to see. He can often learn not only what a cow herself has produced, but in many cases what her mother and grandmother did before her, and whether they were regular breeders of healthy calves, and lived to a good old age. He knows exactly

when she calved, and so can form some idea of whether she will milk on steadily. If he buys in the open market, in most cases he knows nothing about his purchase. She may be giving three gallons of milk a day though a three months' old calf is sold with her, but he can't be sure the calf is her own. That very likely arrived a fortnight before, and when she has really calved three months the three gallons may have dropped to one. But that is a minor disadvantage, for worse is the chance of unwittingly buying a diseased animal. Thanks to the regulations of the Board of Agriculture, the risks in the case of most serious diseases are now too remote to be considered, but contagious abortion, one of the breeder's worst enemies, is easily introduced into a herd in this way. Prices in the market are naturally lower than when buying privately. Shorthorns bought in the market might not cost more than £15 to £18, but a cow from a good milking herd could hardly be got for less than £25 privately. Jerseys may be got in the market for from £10 to £15, privately from £15 to £25. Ayrshires cost about £12 to £15 in Scotland, and imported Kerries can be



Copyright

COUNTRY HOUSE DAIRIES.—THE MILKMAID.

E. Frick

had for about £10, and privately from a good herd for from £15 to £20. These are prices of average animals. Cows over eight or nine years old may be had for much less, while ten times these prices might be asked for anything extra good.

When once the little herd is started, it is a good plan to rear some of the best heifer calves to come in later on, and so avoid buying fresh cows, unless absolutely necessary. It adds very much to the interest of the thing, and is not an expensive amusement like rearing foals, for heifers intended for the dairy do not require high feeding, and often begin to earn their own living at two years old. Before buying the cattle the cow-house must be ready to receive them. It is poor economy to put good cows into badly-constructed buildings, and if new ones are to be built it is just as well to look at several first-class homesteads first, and get an idea of what will suit best. If old sheds are to be used the internal fittings will probably require alteration; galvanised iron stalls, mangers, etc., all complete can now be obtained and fixed at little cost, and answer the purpose very well.

The principal points in the construction of the cow-house are that it should have a brick or cement floor, with a shallow open drain, that there should be ample air space, and that the windows should be large, and placed so high in the wall that they can be open without a draught blowing on to the animals, which in any case should stand with their heads towards the windows, not their tails, as is usually the case. The mangers should be of an impervious and washable material, and to avoid infection they should not communicate with one another. The drain at the back of the standings must be washed down with a disinfectant and plenty of water every day, and the walls should be lime-washed frequently. By strict attention to such details, even when the herd *appears* in perfect health, serious outbreaks of disease are often prevented. Prevention is better than cure, and if these precautions are only taken when an animal is obviously ill, they are usually too late to stop the illness spreading if it happens to be infectious.

The amount of time the animals ought to spend in the shed varies in different parts of the country, and there is great difference of opinion on this subject. As a rule they are housed at night from the beginning of October to the end of April, but they must go out for exercise in the daytime all through the winter, unless the weather is exceptionally bad. In that case they ought to be turned into a sheltered yard, for they must have fresh air. In summer they are usually out day and night, only coming in to be milked; and this raises the question how much grass is required to supply a cow with summer grazing, and hay for winter? This is usually put at $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres, according to the richness of the land; but milk cows exhaust the pasture more than any other stock, unless they get a liberal allowance of cake and other bought foods, and it is better altogether to renew the fertility of the soil by feeding the cattle well instead of buying manure, because grass heavily dressed with "artificial" is not suitable for dairy stock, as it often affects the butter. Sometimes in severe droughts there is scarcely any grass on the fields, and though cattle keep in much better condition than one could expect on the burnt-up pastures, they give very little milk unless supplied with plenty of other food. On the home farm forage crops ought always to be grown, to ensure a supply of juicy food for the whole year, but when only two or three cows are kept, and there is no arable land, a scarcity in summer must be met with meal and grain. In that case it is important to remember that a certain amount of hay or oat straw must also be given, for when there is practically no grass the rations must be as carefully balanced as in winter time. Tables showing the proper proportions in which different foods should be used are given in most books on dairying, and it is unnecessary to go into the subject here. A chaff cutter is

always an economy, for it makes it possible to use the rougher hay which would otherwise be wasted, and though this is not a valuable food in itself, it forms the necessary "padding," for cattle cannot digest concentrated food when given alone. When the hay or oat straw has been chaffed, it may be mixed with meal or pulped roots, and then steamed or damped with boiling water. The mixture should be allowed to stand about twelve hours, so that it may begin to heat a little, which makes it more digestible.

To make good butter, which will keep well, it is important that the milk should never come in contact with dirt of any kind. The cow's udders should be washed, if necessary, and the milkers must, of course, wash their hands before they begin milking. Then the pails, when full, must not remain in the cow-house, but should be taken to the dairy immediately the milk has been weighed. This, by the way, ought always to be done (each cow's milk separately) at least once a week. It really entails very little trouble, is far more accurate than measuring, and a record of some kind must be kept, or it is impossible to tell which cattle are profitable and which are not. Each animal should also be tested for butter at least three times a year. If there is a home farm a separator should always be used to obtain the cream, but if only two or three cows are kept it is best to raise the cream in the Devonshire fashion—by scalding, not boiling, the milk before setting it. The cost of a small separator is about £10, and with only a small quantity of milk it is scarcely worth while to get one, as by the Devonshire mode the skimming is almost as perfect as with the machine, and the skim milk is still sweet. But as the scalded cream keeps sweet longer than separated or naturally raised cream, it is necessary (unless ice is available) to add a little sour butter-milk as a "starter" to sour it, because in churning sweet cream there is a considerable loss of butter unless it can be done at a temperature of below 54deg. Fahr. When more butter is being made than is required, some of it should be potted for use in times of scarcity. Great care must be taken to extract all the butter-milk, and to pack the butter so closely as to exclude all air. If this is carefully done, the butter ought to keep well, but if it should prove at all "strong" when opened for use, it may be made sweet by washing first in warm milk and then in cold water, the substance which causes the rancid taste being soluble in warm milk. Though we may estimate the dairy returns in *kind*, it is hardly possible to guess at the financial returns, as cost of keep, labour, and land vary in different parts of the country. But there is no doubt that (especially when the demand is regular) the household dairy ought to pay well, because almost everything is sold direct at retail prices. In cases where the owner is in town for a considerable part of the year it is less profitable, and unless the calving time of the different cows is well arranged, there may be a great deal of milk produced when it cannot be profitably used or sold, and it is one of the first elements of success in dairying to have the milk just when it is wanted.

EDITH CORNISH.

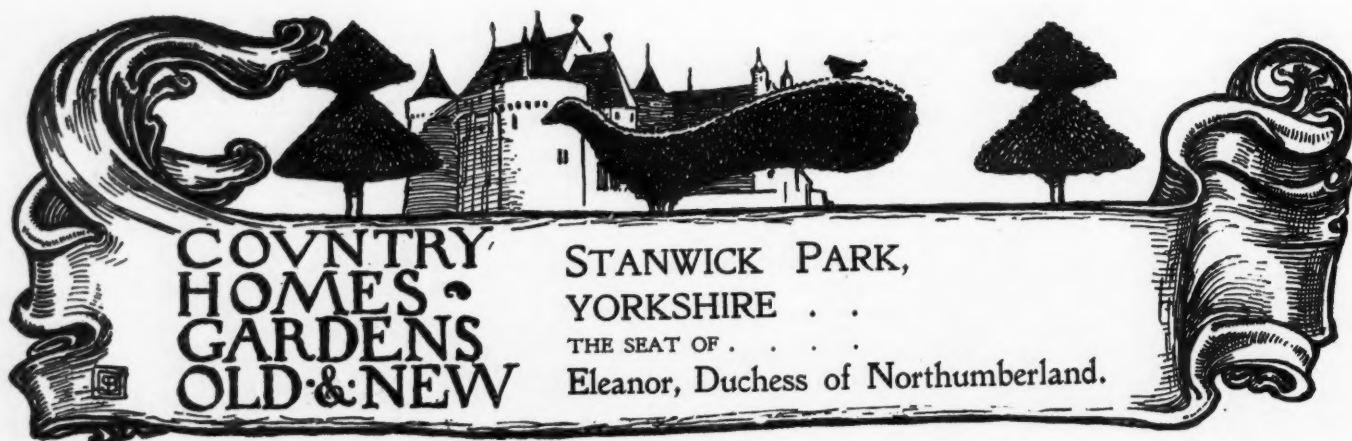
AN . . . INTERLOPER.

"WHEREVER have you come from, you ugly cat?" exclaims pert little Cocky, of Sebright breed. It is quite the old story of "Dignity and Impudence" over again. Poor Puss! Handsome is as handsome does! No looks can she claim, no beauty—her stump of a tail makes her disowned alike by Manx and other feline families—but what of that? Her cleverness and motherly love are far beyond looks and breeding, for this heroic mother carried her three blind babies away from the cruelty and ill-treatment she had experienced, and brought them to a haven of rest. With that wonderful animal instinct she had found the abode of a true "friend of animals." Now angry words and blows are things of the past, and all the hardship Pussy has to undergo are the shrill remarks of this little lord of the farmyard, who does not approve of this new arrival in his domain, and is envious of the bowl of good bread and milk now before her.

F. G. S.



"I HOPE I DON'T INTRUDE."



STANWICK PARK lies in one of the most beautiful regions of Yorkshire, between the rivers Swale and Tees. The region embraces great moorlands and lofty heights, from which streams, stained by peat, descend, and break into yellow foam as they traverse their rocky beds. They give grace to the wooded and pastoral country that lies beyond, and have among them the Hutton Beck, which rises not far from the course of the romantic Greta, and passes by beautiful Stanwick to the Tees. Richmond and Aske Park are almost neighbours of the Duchess of Northumberland's splendid seat, and the whole district is one of great charm, both to the antiquary and the lover of the country. The former finds particular interest at Stanwick because of the extensive early remains with which the country is filled, while the latter discovers new delights in the English land too little known.

The camps, dykes, and entrenchments of this district were all most carefully surveyed at the cost of the late Duke of Northumberland. Stanwick is itself surrounded by very remarkable earthworks, which are on a line with the great dyke running from Richmond, on the Swale, to Barford, opposite

Gainford, on the Tees. There is no history connected with them, but in few other places in this country has anything been discovered to approach them in magnitude. They have been pronounced by antiquaries to have been formed by the British, and in later times to have been made use of by the Romans. A field immediately to the north of the house, and lying between it and the Church of St. John, Stanwick, is conjectured to have been a British citadel, for it is strongly defended on all sides by entrenchments, more especially on the west, where the works form an angle with the point cut off. Here, perhaps, was the entrance from that direction, as there are entrenchments within entrenchments, running in all directions, the whole system of works being connected with the great double dyke and ditch running across the country. Anyone wishing to know more of these evidences of early occupation will find a full account in the *Archaeological Journal*, Nos. 23 and 24, 1849, with drawings from surveys made by Mr. Henry Maclauchlan, for the fourth Duke of Northumberland. The probable origin of the name of Stanwick is from the existence of two Roman roads, departing, respectively, from Catterick (Cataractonium) on the





Copyright

THE HOUSE FROM THE MEADOW.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Swale to Carlisle (Luguvallium), and northward to Binchester (Vinovia), which the Angles, when they fought their way in the fifth century to this part of the country, would call "Stane wegs" or stone ways. In later days the name became Stanweghs, Stanwigges, Staywigges, and at last Stanwick.

Stanwick is approached on the east side from the pretty village of Aldborough by a wide road, with well-kept hedges, supported on each side by a low stone wall. On arriving at the outer lodge the drive is cut through an entrenchment, and thus we enter the park.

On the right are some fine trees of enormous dimensions, and the ground rises in the north with an eminence called Henall Hill, on the top of which is a circular trench. A little further to the west beautiful views of Kirkbridge and of the Church of St. John are opened out, and on the south side of the drive are lovely glimpses across the park, between groups and plantations of trees, the disposition of

some of which is due to Mr. William Gilpin, the famous arboriculturist.

On arriving at the inner lodge, passing from the park into the pleasure grounds, we enter through a pair of handsome wrought-iron gates, designed by the late Duke, assisted by his friend Mr. William Twopeny, a frequent guest at Stanwick. There is also a single leaf gate of the same design and workmanship on the north side of the house, where the walk leading from the pleasure grounds joins the drive extending northward.

Returning to the inner lodge, the house is reached by a wide, straight drive, bordered on each side by well-kept lawns, that on the north side being backed by a border of shrubs, and numerous groups of rhododendrons and other shrubs.

The house, which is a large rectangular building of plain and substantial character, with an open court in the centre, has been built at various dates, the south side bearing the date 1662, and the west 1740, while the north and east sides were



Copyright

THE PARK FROM THE GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright

THE HOUSE FROM THE LAKE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

erected in 1842, from designs by Decimus Burton, architect of the palm house at Kew. There are other houses of the same character in this part of the country, and Stanwick presents some resemblance to Rokeby on the Tees, made famous by Sir Walter Scott.

The Italian garden on the south side of the house was laid out by Mr. Nesfield, and is enclosed by a balustrade wall, surmounted by appropriate classic vases. The area is divided by a wide gravel walk, and there is a beautiful fountain of Aberdeen granite, while in the centre of each half of the garden, on high pedestals, stand reproductions of the Borghese and Medici vases. All the walks and flower beds have stone edgings, and variety is given to an admirable effect by the suitable disposition of fine Irish yews, junipers, and standard hollies. The garden gates are all of wrought iron, and were designed by Mr. Salvin. Another flower garden adorns the west side of the house, and, like the Italian garden, is filled with beautiful sub-tropical and other plants.

The French garden is so named owing to the fact that it was laid out by a French abbé, an *émigré* during the Revolution, who was domiciled with the family. This is a walled pleasure, radiant with flowers, such as are not infrequent in the North of England—there is one at Rokeby, and the separated garden at Raby is of the same character—and is situated at a short distance from the house on the east side, the southern wall being arcaded, giving views across the grounds and deer park. Picturesqueness is added by the presence of an ornamental dairy in the arched wall, octagonal in shape, and raised above the general level, the walls and ceiling being beautifully ornamented, while the floor is inlaid with Indian marble, soapstone, agate, and cornelian from Agra. On the east side, in a line with the dairy, is a stone archway giving access to the terrace which runs along this side of the garden. Wide stone steps lead down from the terrace to the radiant space where stands the fine conservatory, divided into three compartments, and filled with various exotics, palms, bananas, etc. To the right of the conservatory is the orchid house, containing a fine collection of orchids.

Some years ago when bedding plants were so popular, and hardy

flowers almost swept away, a fine collection of these was always retained at Stanwick. The Stanwick carnation, the famous misnamed Raby Castle, was brought originally, about forty years ago, by Eleanor, Duchess of Northumberland, from the garden of her sister-in-law, Duchess Charlotte, at Lebanon House, Twickenham, and has been a favourite flower, and cultivated ever since its introduction, being perfectly hardy and free, and blooming long after others are over.

Along the north side of the kitchen garden runs a range of fruit houses, where peaches, nectarines, grapes, and figs are largely grown. It was here that the famous Stanwick nectarine was raised from stones given to Lord Prudhoe by Mr. Barker, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Aleppo. The seed was sown in March, 1843, and the buds were inserted in the following autumn on a Bellegarde peach, and the first fruit, produced in 1846, proved to be the largest and finest in flavour then known. Lord Prudhoe, who had become Duke of Northumberland, placed the Stanwick nectarine in the hands of Messrs. Rivers, of Sawbridgeworth, for propagation, and on May 15th, 1850, the stock, consisting of twenty-four plants, was sold by auction, and realised £164 17s., which His Grace presented to the funds of the Gardeners' Benevolent Institution, such an amount never



Copyright

THE CONSERVATORY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

having been raised before on the same number of small nectarine trees in pots.

The gardens cover about seven acres, and the pleasure grounds twenty acres. On the lawn are many fine trees. The girth measurement, taken at 4ft. from the ground, of some of the specimens will give an idea of their dimensions: A thin-shelled variety of walnut, 14ft. 6in.; beech, 15ft.; Spanish chestnut, 15ft. 4in.; elm, 13ft. 8in.; ash, 15ft. 2in.; oak, 12ft. 8in.; lime, 13ft.; sycamore, 12ft. 5in.; Scotch fir, 9ft. 5in.; horse chestnut, 12ft. 9in.; cedar of Lebanon, 9ft. 1in. A fine larch, supposed to have been raised from seed brought from China, and given to the Earl of Northumberland, girths 10ft. 11in.

On the west side, on rising ground, partly surrounded by small trees and large yews, stands a tall column, forming a termination to the vista on proceeding up the carriage drive. To the north-west and not far from the house there is a small irregularly-shaped lake, with an island on which grow some fine specimens of *Thuja gigantea* and American weeping willow, while in the water are bulrushes, white water-lilies, flowering rush, buckbean, and Japanese iris, the banks being clothed with rhododendrons, purple loosestrife, and other shrubs.

On leaving the house towards the north, the drive passes between Stanwick Church on the left and Kirkbridge on the right. The church is a typical specimen of the local ecclesiastical architecture, dating from about the year 1200, and was restored in 1868 at the expense of the Duchess Eleanor. One of its most interesting features is the large tomb of the first Sir Hugh Smithson of Stanwick, who, for services during the Civil War, was created a Baronet by Charles II. His great-grandson, also Sir Hugh, a century later, married Lady Betty Seymour, the heiress of the Percys, and was created



Copyright

FROM THE SOUTH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Duke of Northumberland. The stained glass in the east window is in memory of the fourth Duke, who for many years lived at Stanwick as Lord Prudhoe. There are three chapels of ease connected with the church, one of which, at Aldborough, was built by the Duchess Eleanor in 1890.

Kirkbridge, a fine old manor house in the vicinity (now a farmhouse), was the birthplace of Misses Mary and Agnes Berry, who were intimate friends of Horace Walpole—he called them the "Elderberries"—and at his death Miss Mary became his literary executrix. Carlton, which lies about a mile to the north-east of Stanwick, at one time a separate estate, has been for many years merged with the Stanwick estates. The hall is occupied by Mr. W. M. Cobbett, Her Grace's land agent, but the gardens are retained in her own hand, there being a good kitchen garden, in which large quantities of hardy fruit and



Copyright

THE CARRIAGE DRIVE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

vegetables are grown, as well as a range of vineries and a peach house. Her Grace distributes a large quantity of the grapes grown here among the sick and suffering. She is a great lover of flowers, plants, and trees, and takes a keen interest in the gardens, and gives great encouragement to her gardener, Mr. William Higgin, who has had the entire management of the gardens and grounds since he came to Stanwick in 1866.

BOOKS OF THE DAY.

SEVERAL books of totally different character occupy my attention to-day. The first, to which passing reference has been made, is "Ruskin on the Religion of Beauty," translated from the French of R. de La Sizeranne, in a very readable fashion, by the Countess of Galloway (George Allen). To this the death of Mr. Ruskin adds a special interest for the moment, but the book would at any time have been noticeable, for it is the discriminating, appreciative, and pleasantly written work of a highly-cultivated Frenchman. What is this Religion of Beauty? It is, says Lady Galloway in her bright preface, "a religion that should appeal alike to rich and poor. It is not a substitute for the Christian Faith; on the contrary, it is a protest against the religion of Self, of Materialism, and of Worldly Advancement, and it is but a branch growing out of the Igdrasil or World Tree of the religion of Christ. It teaches that the beautiful in Nature is precious, because it is the expression of God's love and power on earth. It teaches that where there is no truth there can be no Art and no life, and for the work of daily duty, its command is that of the great German poet—'Im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen, Resolut zu leben.'" And the French exponent of this religion, who is he? He is, on his own showing, one who many years ago, in the cloisters of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, and on the feast of Thomas Aquinas, found a bevy of "girlish forms, youthful with Giottoesque profiles, wearing sailor hats and little white veils, and all carrying bunches of mimosa in their hands," clustering round the Triumph of St. Thomas Aquinas, and holding a species of Ruskinian service. Surely it is a very sweet picture which is conjured up by these words. Then he went to England and found himself "in one of those Gothic drawing-rooms where sobriety is wed to comfort, and the claims of taste are satisfied without sacrifice of ease," which is a prettier way of putting it than I have met in any other Frenchman, and an indirect rebuke to much of the bamboo and ribbon trimming "Art" furniture of too many houses. And in this house he found the Langdale linen, and the host wearing a coat of cloth made by the St. George's Guild. In a word, he was in a Ruskinian household, and he was so far infected with its spirit that he resolved to make a complete and exhaustive study of an extraordinarily interesting personality—and this is how he did it.

"It seemed to me that for my purpose I ought not only to read and study those who knew him best, and above all his most chosen disciple



Copyright

A GARDEN GATE.

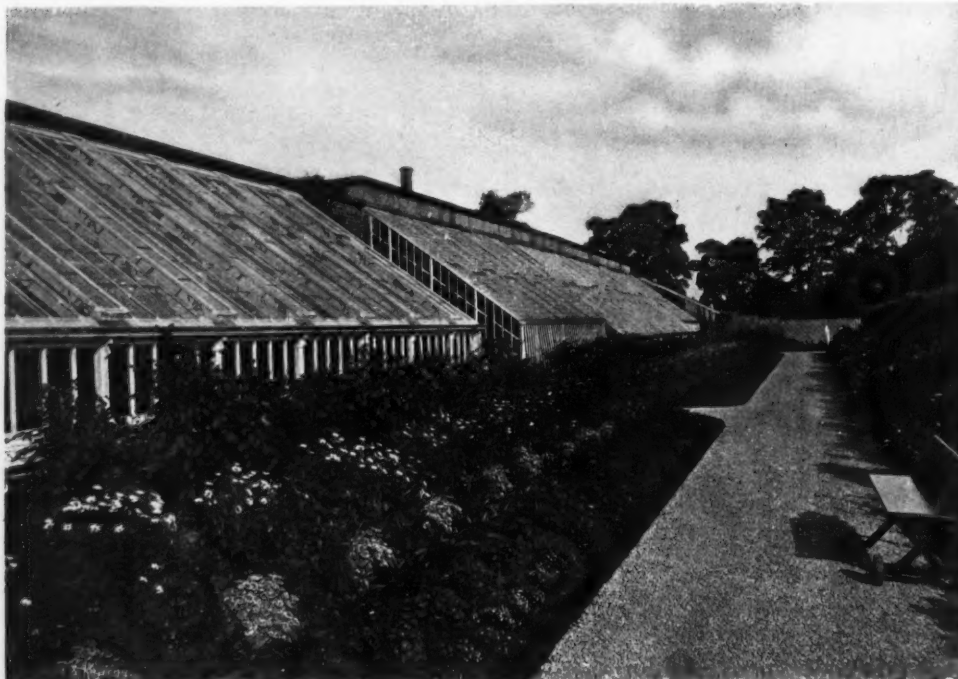
"COUNTRY LIFE"

which he loved so well. In their midst all is but chaos; gradually, as we recede, they blend and unite till they stand on the horizon, only a 'little blue film' yet 'itself a world.'"

It is, perhaps, only his dramatic French way of putting it, but certainly it is a very charming way, and it impresses. There follow, not volumes, as would have been all too likely to be the case if the commentator had been English or American, but 300 pages of easy print, tersely written, and brightly withal, which to me seem to give a clearer, a saner, and, there'ore, a more truly appreciative, idea of Ruskin's life and character and aims than anything else which has come under my notice. In passage after passage the French appreciator proves how keen is his insight, and one lays the book down with a feeling that, great as has been the fascination which it has exercised on the mind, the soul is the better for it. There are many beautiful passages. They must be left to the reader; but in order to show how brightly our French critic can write, and to stir up memories of never-to-be-forgotten scenes at Oxford, a vivid description, in the dramatic present, of one of his lectures may be quoted. The eager crowd of listeners, the face and figure of the Master, have been painted in glowing words.

"He begins, and at first it seems as if a clergyman were preaching a sermon in the hall—for he is reading passages written with much care, marking his cadences, balancing his periods, restraining his gesture, and subduing his glance.

Little by little, as he reads over his own words, he grows animated. Exaltation returns as on the day he wrote them. He forgets the dead pages which lie before him on the table and looks at the living faces of his listeners. Do they agree with him up till now? He cannot go on without knowing. He asks them, makes them lift their hands in sign of agreement, and, emboldened, he attacks the heart of his subject, improvises, pauses to show a diagram. It may be the head of a lion by a pseudo-classic sculptor with which he compares a tiger's head drawn by Millais in the Zoological Gardens. At the incongruous sight there is loud laughter. But this is not enough, the Master must give a pictorial description of things; he lets himself go and loses all restraint. If he is speaking of birds he imitates those which fly and those which strut. If he would explain that the art of engraving is the art of scratching, he imitates the cat's use of its claws. The audience would howl down anyone else, but it feels that here is a man speaking under the influence of an idea, not declaiming but crying aloud a truth which he has discovered but a moment ago. It is not of himself that he makes an exhibition, but of his subject. He heaps observation on observation, he multiplies arguments. Botany, geology, exegesis, philology, all is good which serves to prove his thesis. Now he no longer pleads but prophesies, and those who are taking notes give up co-ordinating them. He has lost his thread, but he has gained his audience. The confused succession of lucid and ingenious thoughts at once puzzles and



Copyright

STANWICK PARK THE KITCHEN GARDEN. "COUNTRY LIFE"

Mr. W. G. Collingwood, but more than that, I must retrace through Europe and through the history of 'Aesthetic' the path the Master had trod. In Switzerland, at Florence, at Venice, at Amiens, on the banks of the Rhine or of the Arno, everywhere where he had worked I, too, worked after him, sometimes sketching over again the sketches whence he had drawn his theories and his examples, waiting for the same light he had waited for, always seeking, as it were, on the eternal monuments the fugitive shadows of his thought. Then for several years I delayed to write until his system dawned upon me no longer as a delicious medley but as a harmony of great lines, like those Alpine mountains

enthralled. What is it—instinct? science? imposture? genius? Who can say? But we listen and delightedly follow this jolting jerking road, which is always winding and at each turn opens to us some new valley, some unexpected horizon. At last we seem to be near the summit; as we climb the view opens more and more, and amidst loud applause the lecture which began with microscopic details ends with a grand first principle. From the humble village hidden in the hollow of a valley our guide, with the edelweiss for his badge, has conducted us by a thousand windings to a lofty peak whence we may look out over all a world."

The next book on my list is pure French, being "Dressage et emploi du cheval de Selle," by Lieutenant de Saint-Phalle (Paris: H. le Soudier). It is beautifully printed on good paper, and it rejoices in that cover of paper, in place of boards, which delights many book-lovers. For the life of me, after the book has travelled about in my portmanteau from place to place, I cannot make out why, unless indeed the theory is that it is unfair to saddle the purchaser with the price of a substantial cover until he has satisfied himself by perusal that the book is worth binding for the library. In relation to this volume, from the point of view of the country house library, there is no doubt. One may say, with General de Bellegarde, who contributes a foreword "Je ne partage cependant pas toutes vos théories; d'ailleurs, vous le savez, chaque cavalier a ses procédés conformes à son tempérament et à ses aptitudes." But it is a very interesting and humane and complete book notwithstanding. It is, again in the language of the General, "l'exposé détaillé des moyens simples et raisonnés que vous avez employés en vous servant seulement de la main et des jambes à l'exclusion des éperons et de la cravache employés comme aides." The italicised words are the keynote of a highly scientific and thorough work, and the fifty pages which deal with La Haute-Ecole are full of interest. In this matter, as in many others, I speak from hearsay, for I am not one of those happy men who find themselves in sympathy with a horse, or (and this is much more important and painful) the horse in sympathy with them. But, on the authority of many excellent cavalry officers, I venture to assert that La Haute-Ecole, with all its intricate movements, is of far more value than that it is generally understood or believed to be in England.

Of Sienkiewicz, M. de Soissons, in a translation of some of the Slav's Tales (George Allen) says: "Almost everyone of his stories awakens—as a stone thrown at a flock of sparrows gathering in winter time round barns—a

thousand winged reminiscences." As a matter of fact the stone in question does not awaken reminiscences, but disturbs sparrows, and the simile is by no means apt. That, however, is the fault not of Sienkiewicz but of M. de Soissons, and the stories themselves are quite good in their way, marked by sincerity, and even by poetry. They are also ecstatic, reminding one of some of the best "Things Seen" in the *Academy*. Here is an example in which the Slav temperament expresses itself very plainly:

"I see a marvel, and that's the end!"

"Now I understand for the first time why a man has been given eyes.

Corpo di Baccho! What beauty!

"I walk with Ostrynski. At the corner of the street I see a lady pass. I stand as if rooted in the ground. I become wood—stone! I open my eyes, I lose my senses, I unconsciously grab Ostrynski's cravat, and loosen it. Help!—I die!

"That her features are perfect—what can this explain? Features are not everything. She is simply an artistic creation! A masterpiece as a drawing, a masterpiece as colouring, a masterpiece in conception. Grieve at the sight of her would have risen from his tomb and hanged himself in the consciousness that he merely painted scarecrows. I stare, I glare, I cannot take my eyes away. She walks alone—but no! With her walk Poetry, Music—with her walk Spring, Bliss, and Love. I am not sure that I should care to paint her on the spot; I should first kneel down before her and kiss her feet out of gratitude that she is so beautiful! What I would do I really do not know myself! She passes us, brilliant as a summer day. Ostrynski greets her, but she sees him not. I wake as if from a magic trance and cry 'We shall follow her.'"

The first story, "A Country Artist," is really a very beautiful and pathetic piece of work.

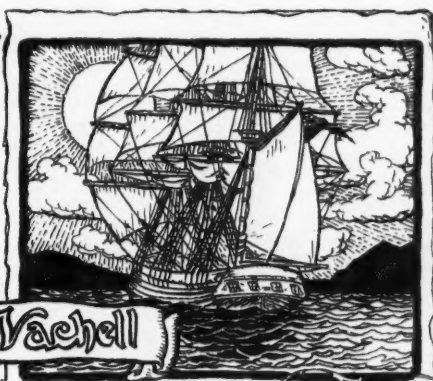
John Charity

A Romance of Yesterday

Containing certain adventures and love passages in Alta California of John Charity, yeoman of Cranberry Orcas in the County of Hampshire, England as set down by himself.

Edited by

Horace Amesley Vachell



Rockham. del. 1899.

CHAPTER VII.

I FIND MYSELF IN A PECK OF TROUBLES.

HAVING returned thanks to Our Lady of Sorrows, Magdalena vouchsafed me a brilliant smile, and pushed through the bars her hand, which I devoutly kissed. I was standing on the public highway, but not a soul was stirring either within or without the house. My heart, I confess, beat the devil's tattoo. It seemed that something more than mere chance had brought a friend that night to Magdalena Estrada.

She wasted no precious seconds in coquetry.

"Heaven has sent you," she murmured, "to save me from a hateful marriage with Señor de Castañeda."

She gave him the particle, to which, I believe, he was entitled, though few used it, and the formality emphasised her dislike of the man.

"I am at your service," said I, warmly.

"I dare not appeal to Alvarado," she continued. "It is most important that my father and his friends should be conciliated. A small cause of provocation would rank them with the *abajenos*. You see we are all connected by blood and marriage."

"I understand," said I.

"But Vallejo, they say, will not mix himself up with these factions. He is a gallant gentleman, always prepared to espouse the cause of the weak. Señor, you must tell him from me that I cannot wed this Mexican. I cannot! Not to please ten thousand fathers, not for all the land in California. I would sooner, if the worst comes to the worst, enter a convent. Will you tell him this, señor, and bring me back his answer? One word from him to my father will suffice to at least postpone this horrible wedding. I could go to Sonoma till the times mend. Then, when Alvarado's position is assured, I can trust him to help me. Meantime, some pretext must be found for delay. Don Santiago asked my father to-night to name an early day. Thank Heaven, Lent is close at hand; we must wait in any case till Easter; and Vallejo hates the Mexicans; he is a true Californian."

She spoke so rapidly that I followed the words with difficulty.

"I tried to see Father Quijas, but they kept him from me. Oh! they know that I am desperate. And they even suspect you, señor. My aunt scolded me well for—for being so forward, so unmaidenly," she said.

I caught her hand and kissed it again, not quite so devoutly. The answer seemed satisfactory.

"Give Vallejo this ring, señor; it belonged to my dead

mother, his first cousin, and ask him for her sake to interfere. I think—I hope that he will."

"By God," said I, "if he doesn't, I will!"

My confidence seemed to impress her.

"That is all," she murmured. "How can I thank you? What can I do or say?"

She looked wistfully at me, the pretty child, as if she would fain leave her prison. I thrust my arm past the barriers and clasped her round the waist. I swear solemnly 'twas but to comfort her. A strong arm tells its own story to the weak. Then her head drooped towards me, and we kissed each other through the bars. As her lips clung to mine, the scales fell from my eyes, and I knew that she loved me with the passion of youth. I have never played the dog in the manger. I believed that Providence had sent this loving soul to comfort me, so I swore to comfort her, and you may be sure that I succeeded. I had known her but a week, some cold-blooded Saxon may say. And what of it? Her trust in a stranger would have fired a wiser and cooler head. Her kisses would have provoked kisses from a graven image.

"But Juanito, *querido*," she whispered presently, "this seems to have complicated matters."

"Not at all," I replied, promptly. "On the contrary 'tis now simple as A B C. Come weal or woe, I am bound to you, and you to me."

A fatuous solution of a problem, but it pleased Magdalena mightily.

"That is true. We are bound you and I. Ah, *Dolor*! you are a heretic."

I waited, with a queer feeling in my throat. Then she dropped the formal "usted," and murmured softly:

"I love thee—I love thee—I love thee!"

Those confounded bars were as hard and cold as that proverbial Charity to which I trust I am an exception. But they served to remind me that other barriers lay between this loving creature and a poor yeoman's son—prejudice, avarice, ambition, superstition. Yet these difficulties whetted rather than blunted my determination to overcome them. The Alps had been crossed before.

Before we parted Magdalena gave me a tress of her hair, and snipped a yellow lock from my temples, that she swore would lie in her bosom. Then the jealous witch asked me point-blank if there had been love passages between me and another. And I confess that I was tempted sorely to lie to her. Being a son of Adam I foolishly evaded the question.

"There is not a woman in England," I replied, "whose eyes are wet for me, save my dear mother."

"But the Señora Valence?"

"I have kissed her a thousand times. We were brought up together. She is my cousin. I have been a diligent student, *querida*, with eyes glued to my books."

"A student—thou, *Bueno!* For the future thou must look at me."

I vowed that my eyes should prove her faithful servants. Then in turn I asked if she had lived heart-whole for seventeen years.

"I used to tell the girls, Juanito, that I would surely marry a man with blue eyes and yellow hair; a man with a white skin and a white heart; a strong man, *querido*, as thou art, brave and clever. But," she sighed, prettily, "I really thought thou would'st never come to me. *Santisima!* my aunt has heard us!"

I could hear that stout dame rolling uneasily upon an ancient bed that creaked with almost human infirmity. Magdalena pointed expressively down the road, and silently closed the casement. I fled to the friendly gulch, and lay snug for some five minutes; then the casement opened again, and I cautiously stole up. Tia Maria Luisa was snoring blissfully, the alarm had proved a false one. Magdalena, however, was shivering with fright, so we kissed again and again—and parted.

Now common-sense, not to mention fatigue, ought to have steered me straight to my lodging; but excitement had banished sleep, and I felt in the mood for a stroll. The moon had risen, and now shone palely through the mist. The fog was less thick. So, wrapping my mantle about me, I walked on up the road, and away from the town. My heart was still beating an infernal tattoo, but my head grew cooler, and I reflected soberly that in truth I was up to my ears in a very pretty pickle, and like to be well salted before I was out of it. Nor could I take counsel of any man, saving, perhaps, Father Quijas, who knew that I was a heretic, and no fit mate for a true believer. Weighing the matter, I made certain that Alvarado would prove my friend, when, *bien entendu*, I had proven myself his. And I looked forward to meeting the *comandante*, Vallejo, who was a power in the land, and a gallant, courtly gentleman to boot. But the future,

study it as I might, was as misty as the moon above me, though illumined by the light of love.

Now adventures, so often a synonym for troubles, come in battalions. I had had, God knows, enough excitement for one night; but the Fates had me in their toils, and were minded to play the spider to my fly, for I soon found myself in a most unhappy position—a tangled web—from whence, squirm as I might, I dared not extricate myself for fear of ensnaring two others—my master Alvarado, and my sweet mistress, Magdalena. In a word, sorely against my will, I was forced to undertake the dishonourable rôle of eavesdropper and spy.

I was passing on my return Estrada's house, loitering, in

truth, beneath my lady's window—what fools we mortals be!—and hoping to steal another kiss before seeking my lodging. The window was shut, however, and the taper had been extinguished, so I scratched lightly on the pane, and waited—not for long. Magdalena I knew would sleep but little that night. She heard the signal and unfastened the casement. But our lips had scarce met when the sound of voices floated up the road, and for the second time I fled into the gulch. From behind the shelter of a sage bush I could just see two men, but 'twas impossible to distinguish their faces. And speaking as they did in Spanish, very softly and quickly, I could not swear that I knew them, although the voice of one reminded me strongly of Soto.

"Is it certain," said one, the taller of the two, "is it certain that Bustamente" (the Mexican President) "will support Alvarado?"

"He will support the party in power."

"Well, what chance has Carrillo against Bautista? Not

one. Yet Carrillo would prove a more generous friend."

"My friend, who knows, Bautista may not live to welcome the Comisionado."

The speaker laughed significantly, and then the pair fell to whispering; but strain my ears as I might, I could catch nothing but disjointed words—words, however, of damnable import. 'Twas plain that these were conspirators, ready to sell themselves to the highest bidder, trusting neither God nor man, tossed hither and thither by windy fears, buzzards scenting carrion.

Presently they flitted silently away, and I crawled from the



"Before we parted Magdalena gave me a tress of her hair."

gulch and regained the town. I deemed it of importance to see Alvarado and warn him. Father Quijas had told me that the Governor was a burner of midnight oil, a student of ancient and modern history, and 'twas not yet eleven by my watch. But how to obtain an interview at such an unseasonable hour baffled my wits. Here again, however, fortune stood my friend. I dared not face the questions and raillery of Castro, or else I had marched straight to Quijas, and left to him the solution of the problem. Nor could I get word to Thomas Larkin. Torn by misgiving, I turned the corner of the Presidio wall, and blundered into the arms of a foot passenger. He cursed me roundly in vile Spanish, and I recognised the voice of a friend, an American, the only doctor in Monterey, the best of good fellows.

"Is that you, Pearson?" said I.

"It's what's left of me," he replied. "Confound it, man, you've stove in my bulkheads. Where the deuce are you going in such a desperate hurry?"

"And where are you going?" I retorted. "Come with me, and I'll give you a sip of cognac—not your aguardiente de trigo, but the genuine medicine."

"I'm on duty," said Pearson. "You needn't mention it, but the Governor has sent for me. He's a mighty sick man, let me tell you, though he doesn't show it. He has a Spartan's pluck, that chap, but rheumatism will lay him by the heels if he isn't careful. Good night."

I persuaded him to take me with him, not without argument, for Alvarado, it seemed, had a morbid dread of publishing his infirmity. Together we entered the Governor's house, and were ushered into the same room, whose simple furnishings were an epitome of the owner's life and character. His Excellency was reading, and the volume that engrossed his attention was Cicero's famous essay on friendship. He looked up as we crossed the threshold, and smiled courteously, though his handsome face was seamed with pain. I hastened to explain that business of importance justified my presence, and he begged me to sit down.

"I sent for you," he said to Pearson, "because my knee is worse to-night. Have you brought the liniment? You have. Good. I will apply it myself. If I have inconvenienced you, forgive me."

His consideration for the comfort of others touched me. It is in such matters that men manifest their quality. Pearson bowed and withdrew, and in less than two minutes I had told Alvarado what I knew. He nodded gravely.

"Yes," he said, slowly, "most of my friends are pendulums. I have known that for a long time," and he sighed.

Then he looked at me with his queer enigmatical smile, the smile of the man who holds the key that unlocks the closets where men's skeletons are laid away. Beneath this steadfast gaze my cheek flushed.

"You know Magdalena Estrada?" he said, abruptly.

"I have that honour," I murmured. "Your Excellency presented me to the señorita."

"So I did," he muttered, "so I did. The blame be on my head. You find her charming—no?"

"I have found all the señoritas charming," I replied, evasively.

A question, I could see, was in his eyes, but he denied it utterance. Doubtless he wondered what had led me to Estrada's house. I tried to throw dust in those inquisitive orbs.

"I wished to bid my friends good-bye," I said carelessly.

"Just so."

Racked as he must have been by pain, his lips flickered with humour. 'Twas not hard to guess that the good aunt had made free with my name, and suddenly, like a flash of summer lightning, this thought illumined obscurity. Was this mission to Vallejo an excuse for separating Magdalena and me? It seemed more than likely.

He unlocked a cabinet, and took from it a decanter of sherry and some fine, thin-stemmed glasses. I don't think he knew that sherry is poison to a rheumatic man, for he filled the glasses to the brim and tendered me one.

"I drink to—California," he said, and, clinking our glasses, we emptied them in silence.

I confess that I was perplexed, and to turn the conversation picked up the Cicero and asked my host if he admired the orator and his philosophy.

"I read Latin with difficulty," said he, sitting beside me.

"Can you construe this passage for me?"

I did so.

"Do you read Greek?" he asked.

Upon my answering in the affirmative, he said that he regretted an early lack of education more than anything else. He told me of the few books that he and Vallejo had read together—Chateaubriand, Gil Blas, Buffon, a volume of Rousseau, and some histories. He added modestly that he was self-taught, and I paid him no idle compliment when I replied that he had had an excellent tutor. He spoke with ardour of the pleasures of systematic study, of the joys that temper mental labour, of the delight in acquiring stores of knowledge.

"Ignorance will ruin us," he said, sadly. "We think of nothing but eating and drinking—and making love," he added, silyly. "You have been but ten days in Monterey, but you must see how it is with us. Some of my friends, men of breeding, too, can hardly read and write. I could mention a dozen, a dozen who sign their names with a *rubrica*! *Dios!* But it maddens me! And this country, so rich, so beautiful—what will become of it? Ah! if I dared speak, if I could tell you what I see, if—"

He paused and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. Then he laughed bitterly, and held out his hand.

"Forgive me, señor; I am keeping a tired man from his bed, and to-morrow you must ride far and fast. *Buenas noches.*"

I rose and clasped his hand.

"You count me your friend?" he said.

"I count myself your grateful servant, Señor Gobernador,"

and with that I left him.

(To be continued.)

SPORT IN THE SNOW.

FOR those of us whose lot is cast in a southern county there must always be a certain sense of novelty and excitement about the first fall of snow. That one's lot should be cast in a southern county, of course does not imply that one is anchored there perpetually. The properly-constituted Briton does not deem himself to be acting in accordance with what is right and fitting if he fails to make an autumnal visit to Scotland, with fishing-rods and gun-case among his paraphernalia; but, as a rule, this sojourning is over before the first snows come, though at almost any season of the year he is apt to catch a glimpse of snow-clad mountains as he comes down the Highland line, even if he has left no snow on the more northern but lower hilltops. Of snow, however, in its universal sense, a silent, white pall covering all the face of Nature, he is not likely to get a sight until the real



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

THE ROCKETING PHEASANT.

Copyright

winter; and our recent experiences dispose us rather to believe that the real winter is either a thing of the past or a fiction of the poets, altogether. Still we do now and then have a snowfall, even as this year. We awake in the morning with more than the normal matutinal brilliancy shining off the white surfaces and surprising our eyes. There is a sense of great silence, more marked, no doubt, in the town than in the country, where the passing footfalls are infrequent, and do not ring on a hard pavement. But even in the country the sounds of Nature are hushed; the birds are in no mood for singing, the cattle are not out in the field. All this goes to make up the pleasurable excitement and novelty of the first aspect of the snow, and kindly helps us to forget the inconveniences of its long continuance and the abominations of its eventual thaw.

Of course, for the full and proper enjoyment of the snow it is necessary to be a boy, and that is a condition that not all of us are in a position to comply with; for a boy can snowball and make snow-men, delights that seem to pall with age. Above all, he can track rabbits through the snow, and mark them down to their forms under some bush sheltered from the wind, where he can shoot them as they sit at short range. And even to this day the writer must plead guilty to a special sense of pleasure in this *RABBIT TRACKING* in the snow, that consists chiefly in its faculty of awaking some reminiscence of the old joy, even though his mature conscience forbids his pursuing it to the old *dénouement* of "shooting him sitting," and compels him rather to kick the rabbit out and give it a chance of scuttling for its life. It is not altogether a very bad chance, for it is wonderful what tricks the glint off the snow plays with the eyesight, making the rabbit, dodging hither and thither through the bushes, singularly elusive. It is quite different with *THE ROCKETING PHEASANT*.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

RABBIT TRACKING.

Copyright

through the snow-laden undergrowth, even if the pheasants would rise kindly when their wings are heavy with snow and their limbs perhaps stiffened. Neither is it favourable for part-ridge driving, for in the snow all objects show up so clearly at a distance, that the birds are apt to see you through the leafless screen that is all the shelter you are likely to find at the snowy season. But for a prowl through the outlying beats, with a good retriever that is not above doing a little of a spaniel's work in putting up for you game, whether furred or feathered, it is a pleasant time enough. Your bag is likely to be small, but likely enough to be prettily varied. It is the season when woodcock may be about. If there is some warm, marshy ground that remains soft and open, there is a chance of a duck or snipe. The wild wood-pigeons are less wild than usual, especially in the neighbourhood of the turnip-fields. Occasionally you or your dog may mark a rabbit to hole, and you may let in the ferret to bolt him. But by preference let it be *THE STRING FERRET*, for it is cold work waiting if he should show a disposition to "lie up"; and rabbits, as a rule, though they are most capricious, are not disposed to bolt freely in the snow. In the snowy weather the rhododendron bushes give good cover for the pheasants, and it is generally well worth while to put the dogs through *THE RHODODENDRONS NEAR THE HOUSE*. The cock pheasants—and probably you will be shooting only cocks—will wander far from their usual haunts. If you should be turning any serious attention to the wood-pigeons, it is an excellent plan to put on a night-shirt over your shooting clothes and a white covering over your cap. In this guise you may fairly surprise yourself by the confidence you seem to inspire in the pigeons, that are usually so wild and wary. You are as invisible, always provided you keep quite motionless, as a ptarmigan crouching on the snow.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

THE STRING FERRET.

Copyright

Clear out against the hard winter sky he offers himself as a brave mark for the gun. He may be missed, indeed—as what shot may not?—but there is no excuse to be found for missing him.

These days of shooting with snow on the ground are by no means the least enjoyable, though they are not the days of the big bags. It is scarcely human to ask your beaters to push

It is not by the size of the bag that you will measure the pleasure of the day. The walk is pleasant, despite the snow, which we will assume to be not in its terrible melting mood; the air is keen and healthy; but the chief pleasure is the pleasure of the eye. The scene is beautiful, and comparatively novel in its beauty, that is if you are one of the southern county folk. The snow has a magically transforming power that can make the plainest landscape lovely; but we need not assume the landscape

to be plain. The contrary is the general rule. In coverts, and especially where there is much larch, the snowy layer clothing the branches and glittering brightly gives a look of fairyland or Christmas-tree-land to the whole scene, forming a very charming background to the modest array of game over which the good dog that has helped you bring it to the bag is MOUNTING SENTINEL. If an ulterior and rather base motive be admitted into your count of the day's pleasurable factors, you may reckon it on the credit side that you will go home hungry as the proverbial hunter and eat your dinner with the proverbially best sauce. It is full time that we should have another of the old-fashioned snowy winters, just to show us how many are its compensations, and also to fill up the sources of our springs, which have run so low during the poor apologies for winters that have been our recent lot.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

MOUNTING SENTINEL.

Copyright

In the end several bets were made about the matter, and a few days later we carried out what the gunmakers call "an exhaustive trial." The kite was constructed of thin wooden laths and stout cartridge paper, and the gun made use of had a moderately choked right barrel and a heavily choked left. One right and left was fired by each of the six of us—that is to say, twelve barrels in all, and we who had backed the gun won the wager, though only just, for whereas five of the shots fired failed to have any effect upon the kite, one or more pellets out of each of seven charges succeeded in piercing the paper; or, to be very accurate, thirty-one pellets out of some 3,240 proved effective. This was only a rough-and-ready trial, of course,

though "exhaustive," and it was carried out solely in order to decide the bets. It serves to indicate, however, that a charge of shot loses its velocity sooner when it is fired perpendicularly than when it is fired horizontally—the point under discussion when our host suggested that we should fire at a kite in order to test the accuracy or the inaccuracy of our respective theories.

A well-known old sportsman, whose name I must omit, has allowed me to overhaul his interesting collection of books, papers, and manuscripts having reference to matters appertaining to sport in the eighteenth century. Among his papers I find the following record: "On the 12th of February, 1796, the Duke of Bedford, Lord R. Spencer, Mr. Fox, Mr. Dutton, Mr. Faulkner, Mr. Fitzpatrick, and Mr. Colquhoun shot on the latter gentleman's manor, at Wriatham, in Norfolk, forty brace of cock pheasants and twenty brace of hares, besides partridges, woodcocks, etc. Perhaps a greater quantity of game was never killed by one party in one day in England." So much for the "good old days" (*sic*). Then there is a tattered leaflet or handbill: "To sportsmen: To be let during the holidays, to one, two, or more sportsmen, about four acres of marsh, well enclosed, near Barking, in Essex. They abound in snipes, bullfinches, sparrows, and yellow-hammers. There is a pond adjoining, well stocked with ducks, at which the gentlemen sportsmen, with powder, may shoot at

SHOOTING GOSSIP.

ON the last day of the season a discussion arose among the members of our shooting party as to whether 1½ oz. of "medium game" shot fired out of a well-choked 12-bore would pierce the paper of an ordinary boy's kite flying about 40 yds. overhead, the charge of powder being 38 gr. of any sort of nitro-compound. Three of us declared that it would, three that it would not.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

THE RHODODENDRONS NEAR THE HOUSE.

Copyright

threepence a shot, but if they put shot in the piece they must pay an additional penny." Lastly, we have an edifying article headed "General Instructions for Shooting," which appeared in the first number of the famous *Sporting Magazine*, in 1792. I quote only a portion of it: "And first it is necessary for any gentleman who sports much to have two guns, the barrel of one about 2ft. 9in., which will serve very well the beginning of the season and for wood shooting, the other about 3ft. 3in., or upwards, for open shooting after Michaelmas. But if you intend one gun to serve all purposes, then a 3ft. barrel, or thereabouts, is the most proper, that is, from 3ft. to 3ft. 6in. A sportsman should also never remain at home till the dew is off; the advantages lost by this are innumerable, and his dress in summer should be green, and in winter dark grey or olive. When a hare starts up at a distance it is often of use to follow her with the eye, because she will sometimes squat down, and you may soon after approach and shoot her on her form. In snow it is very easy to kill partridges, on account of the contrast of their colour with its whiteness, which makes them perceivable at the first glance, and if this happens at the fall of the moon sportsmen with white caps on and shirts over their clothes will frequently destroy half the covey at one shot (on the ground). There are some few sportsmen in England of such keen eyes that they can distinguish the cocks from the hens when the covey rises from the ground, and so expert as not to kill more than a brace of hens in a day's sport. Pheasants, it is to be observed, at sunset leave the underwoods and stubble, and fly up to roost in the long branches of oak trees. Here they are often shot or knocked down with the greatest ease, and are sometimes destroyed, when perched in this manner, by lighted matches, which, being held under them, suffocate them, and they fall to the ground." And yet there are men who declare that game shooting, as a form of sport, has vastly deteriorated!



AT THE THEATRE

HERE this Mr. Pinero has been able to prove that his work has the quality of permanence. He is no mere flash-in-the-pan playwright. There are some plays produced which have proved a very great success, yet which one would never think of reviving. Their attraction

is purely transient. Not so the work of Mr. Pinero. The charm of "Sweet Lavender" has survived a decade; on its revival a little while ago it was as fragrant as ever. The wit and the humour of "Dandy Dick," reproduced at Wyndham's Theatre, sparkled and amused as in the old days at the Court Theatre, even surmounting acting which in some cases was merely mediocre.

"Dandy Dick" bears no signs of age. Any dramatist but Mr. Pinero—if he had had the talent of Mr. Pinero—might have written it yesterday. Mr. Pinero would have made some little changes in it. There would have been one or two verbal quibbles the less; one or two "entrances" would have been managed more adroitly. But the fact remains, to all intents and purposes, "Dandy Dick," originally produced in 1888, bears no mark of antiquity. A play which will stand a rest of twelve years may—in these days of rush and hurry—be classed as a classic.

Mr. Pinero's farces—"The Magistrate," "The Schoolmistress," and "Dandy Dick"—came at a time when the comic stage was given over to adaptations from the French. A farce had become nothing but a collection of doors and windows, extravagant incident piled upon incident even more extravagant. Even so, it was termed, as are similar plays nowadays, "farcical-comedy," although the quality of comedy does not enter into them at all. Mr. Pinero, on the other hand, bluntly dubbed his work "a farce," although "Dandy Dick," like the others from his pen, has in it much that entitles it to the higher title of comedy—it has characterisation, elegance of language, and distinction in design.

As acted at the new theatre in Charing Cross Road, the play suffers in many respects. The company plays well together; but it has not the individuality of the first band of players which attracted all London to the old Court Theatre. Nothing could be much better than the Dean of Mr. Alfred Bishop, although one's memory seems to endow the Dean of the late John Clayton with a more unctuous humour; but memory is apt to play one false when recalling the performances of the favourites of our youth. No Hamlet is like the first Hamlet, though we might have seen

From first to last I have come across, I think, as many rogues, and what I may term "shady characters," as most men, but a more barefaced swindle than the one perpetrated recently at a pigeon-match held in the neighbourhood of a large manufacturing town I do not remember ever to have heard of. A well-known game and trap shot—a celebrity in that locality—had either backed himself or been backed to shoot a match against "a stranger from London" at fifty birds each at 30yds. rise, for £50 a side. All went well until the end of the thirtieth round, when the scores stood: Local celebrity, 24; stranger from London, 27. In the thirty-first round the latter's first barrel missed fire, and he missed his bird with his second. A similar mishap occurred to the same shooter in the thirty-fourth round, and at the end of the fortieth round the scores were even. In the forty-third round the stranger had yet another miss-fire, whereupon the referee decided to cut open all the cartridges which had failed to explode. He then discovered that the three "fauly" cartridges were loaded with wadding and shot only, and a stormy scene followed. In the end the referee pronounced judgment in favour of the local celebrity, declaring that the stranger was to blame "for not having attended more carefully to the loading of his cartridges." I may mention that during the whole of the match the stranger had foolishly allowed his magazine to remain unlocked, and for some time even wide open. It may be taken for granted, therefore, that the dummies were slipped into the magazine by some person or persons interested in the betting while the match was in progress.

It is perhaps unnecessary to add that when the swindle was discovered the match should either have been declared "off," or the individual whose cartridges had been "got at" have been allowed fresh birds in lieu of the *bona fide* "no birds."

TAZZLE.

him in a penny gaff. Mr. Bishop's old clergyman was as pompous and lackadaisical and gravely funny as could be wished. Mr. Edmund Maurice returns to his old part of the sportsman, Mardon, and plays it with all the old vigour—in fact, a little

more; Mr. Denny repeats his irreproachable and cleverly-observed Noah Topping, a fine bit of gruff, unconscious humour. Miss Annie Hughes is wholly delightful as Hannah, his wife, and could not have been better. Mr. George Giddens plays the angelic old humbug, Blore, most excellently, and with a very clever sense of contrast, although his performance is on quite different lines from those of the late Arthur Cecil.

But there can be no doubt that the others of the present company have not caught the spirit of Pinero farce as did their predecessors. Miss Violet Vanbrugh, admirable artist that she is, full of intelligence, spirit, and earnestness, has not the attributes of the delightfully mannish but thoroughly womanly Georgina Tidman, full of stable slang and racing instances. Her swagger does not seem natural to her; she has not the conviction of Mrs. John Wood. Despite the cleverness and the goodwill of her performance, one could see that Miss Vanbrugh was not in thorough sympathy with the character of "George Tid." Messrs. Vane-Tempest and Stanley Cooke were "not in it" with the original representatives of the two absurd officers; but Mr. Vane-Tempest was very good nevertheless. Miss Maud Hoffman and Miss Gracie Lane played prettily as the two girls, the former having caught the spirit of the thing very cleverly.

"THE BETTER LIFE" at the Adelphi proved, after all, to be melodrama, and poor melodrama at that. It is conventional where it is not unpleasant, and ugly where it is not hackneyed. The theological questions raised are quite out of place in the theatre, even if they had opened up new avenues of thought, which they do not. The Socialist-Atheist is a mere counterpart of the Hyde Park orators on Sunday, save that he washes himself and is a good workman. The wicked capitalist and assiduous church-goer has been gibbeted in half a million novels, not to mention the transpontine theatres. The hero who takes upon himself the crime of the plutocrat, who pays him money therefor, which goes to save from starvation the wife and child of the suffering mechanic, we have met before once or twice at least; the low comedian who hides behind a useful screen and hears the whole of the wicked plot is not a new acquaintance. The bediamonded light-o'-love, who flings aside



her jewels and falls, sobbing and repentant, in the arms of a preacher in the slums, is but a variant of a very old type.

Mr. Ernest Leicester, Mr. Fuller Melish, Mr. Luigi Lablache, Miss Elsa Wylde, and Mrs. Cecil Raleigh worked conscientiously for Messrs. Arthur Shirley's and Sutton Vane's play—an adaptation of the Rev. Mr. Sheldon's book, "In His Steps"—but without avail.

MISS EDNA LYALL'S drama, "In Spite of All," produced at the Comedy Theatre, fell far short of our expectations. Its virtues were merely negative. It was not badly written, it was not silly, it was not trivial. On the other hand, it was not new, it was not thrilling, it was not at all out of the ordinary. In fact, it was extraordinarily ordinary for a writer holding the position of Miss Edna Lyall. In language, in story, in development, in ideas, it was commonplace. The plot, telling of the love of a Roundhead Captain and a Cavalier maiden, the attentions of a dissolute officer and the vengeance of a fanatical Puritan, with a duel or two, a scrimmage, and a great deal too much talking, never reached above the mediocre. The dialogue, while adequate, was never more than the baldest of prose. No novelty of design or of execution was there. But there were several things which struck one as being silly.

Mr. Jerrold Robertshaw, Miss Edith Wynne Matthison, Mr. Homewood, and Mr. Ben Greet acted as well as possible under the circumstances.

"A Soldier's Daughter," a clever one-act play by Mrs. Sim, preceded "In Spite of All," and was welcome for showing that Miss Gertrude Burnett is versatile as well as charming, bright as well as sympathetic.

THE revival of "The Prisoner of Zenda" at matinées at the St. James's Theatre is very welcome. You may now attend Mr. Alexander's beautiful playhouse on Wednesday and Saturday mornings and make acquaintance with the dashing ladies and gentlemen of Ruritania as they appeared in the days of Black Michael, preparatory to following—at night—their fortunes three years after, when "Rupert of Hentzau" caused everyone such a lot of trouble. "The Prisoner" is admirably represented by Mr. George Alexander, as King Rudolf and as Rassendyll; Mr. W. H. Vernon, as Sapt; Mr. Esmond, as Fritz von Tarlenheim—their original parts; and by Miss Fay Davis, as Flavia; Miss Julie Opp, as Antoinette; Mr. Bassett Roe, as Black Michael; Mr. H. B. Irving, as Captain Hentzau; Mr. Sydney Brough, as Bertrand; and, in the Prologue, Mr. Vincent, as the Earl of Rassendyll; Miss Esmé Beringer, as Amelia.

By the way, the last dismal scene of "Rupert of Hentzau"—the lying in state—is now omitted.

MRS. LEWIS WALLER—Miss Florence West—is about to tour the provinces with a version, by Mr. B. A. Kennedy, of Mr. Hardy's work, "Tess of the D'Urbervilles." The play will follow the book very closely, and should offer Mrs. Waller the opportunity of some strong and effective acting.

Mr. Richard Lambart has taken the Globe Theatre, vacated by Mr. John Hare, and will there produce a new farcical comedy, entitled "Nurse," by Miss Clo Graves.

The same authoress will have another farcical comedy, entitled "The Bishop's Eye," produced by Mr. Yorke Stephens at the Vaudeville.

It is hinted that "Alice in Wonderland" may form the next Christmas entertainment at the Lyceum Theatre. Although this delightful children's play was recently revived with very great success at the Opera Comique, its popularity is by no means exhausted; indeed, it is doubtful if its hold on the public will ever be relaxed. For there are little children being born every year, and every

year legions of them make their first visit to the theatre. To each successive army Alice will appeal, and to the others there will always be the wish to renew so delightful an acquaintance.

Mr. Arthur Bourchier, conjointly with Mr. Charles Wyndham, is now in command at the Criterion, and promises us a series of most interesting productions. It is likely that his wife, Miss Violet Vanbrugh, will join the Criterion company when her engagement at Wyndham's Theatre shall have come to an end.

It is rumoured that the next Christmas pantomime at Drury Lane will be on the subject of "The Sleeping Beauty."

Miss Lena Ashwell, Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Charles Fulton, Mr. Holman Clark, Mr. Vincent Sternroyd, Miss Ada Brandon, and Miss Suzanne Sheldon are the chief among a very strong company which will support Mr. Robert Taber in "Bonnie Dundee" at the Adelphi.

PHŒBUS.



BOTH are covered with snow and hard with frost. Hounds are confined to road work. "This is the hardest part of my work," said one of our best huntsmen to me once in a like season. Hounds want such a lot of work to keep them in condition. Horses, too, require care, and it is a good plan to let them down a little in a frost. Hard-worked hunters must eat well, and condition is, as we all know, cumulative, the result, as has been said, of three seasons in Leicestershire and the care of a good stud groom. But the strain on a horse's digestive powers is considerable. The principle of the old woman who "lived plain in general, but liked to give her stomach a surprise sometimes," is a sound one, and horses are all the better for a change of regimen. I always give cooked food in a frost, gradually working back to the usual dry rations of corn and beans for the old ones, and corn and peas for the youngsters. As the joyful signs of a thaw are gradually confirmed, and the "long dun wolds are only ribbed (not covered) with snow," I tried a day's beagling last week, but it was no good, and hunting must give way to skating. The Master of the Cottesmore is about to retire after twenty years of successful Mastership. A fine country, a beautiful pack, and a very hard-riding field. Fortunately neither the Quorn nor the Pytchley have any thought of a change. But Mr. Frank Bibby is going to hunt a part of the Shropshire at his own expense; the Shrewsbury side, which is at present divided between the Shropshire and Sir Bryan Leighton's little private pack, will, perhaps, be lent to Mr. Dan Waters of the Wheatland.

From Ireland I hear that Mr. Charters gives up the East Galway after but one season's experience of it. To those who are interested in horse-breeding—and what lovers of country life are not?—I strongly recommend the study of the Hunters' Improvement Society's report and stud book. The returns of the premium horses and the performances of their produce in the show-yard are at once interesting and instructive. The Irish section, which appears for the first time, should develop into a very important part of the book. It is very much to be hoped that hunting men will be especially careful to support the Hunters' Improvement Society's Show with entries and their presence. I will not repeat the opinion that the war makes horse-breeding a patriotic art, and that it must be far more profitable in the future; but at all events it becomes something like a duty to support one or other of our horse societies. The offices—at 12, Hanover Square—which began almost as a private venture, are now almost a national institution, and certainly the work done there is of national importance. To return to the various premium horses, my old favourite Yard Arm has distinguished himself by the great success of his produce. Another very coming horse is Royal Meath. Master Ned is father of many hunters, and all his can jump, and Ascetic is represented in the Grand National by Hidden Mystery, a horse which many people think will win the great steeplechase of the year.

X.



as "the arum lilies in the photograph of the round house have lived out two winters." We have never seen a finer growth of tender plants so far North, and the fact that they have come through unhurt during recent winters proves, of course, that the weather has been exceedingly mild. Even under such circumstances it is surprising to find bold masses of arum lilies in full beauty, their leafy groups adorned with the great ivory-coloured

spathes so eagerly sought after for decoration, and realising high prices at all seasons. This picture of arum lilies reminds one of the growth of the plant in its native land of South Africa, where it fills many a ditch with its big flowers and spathes—pictures of luxuriant growth, but less interesting seen there than in this Scottish garden. The luxuriant groups in the pond are in strange

relief to the surrounding scenery, the big shrub masses near the pondside and the tree-clad hills lining the horizon. This illustration should interest many Scottish flower-gardeners, who might, in sheltered positions especially, try to establish this noble South African plant. Of course, in the North of England and Ireland it is not unusual to find the arum lily almost a weed—if one may so describe a plant of such noble growth—but the climate there approaches more closely that of its native country. In Devonshire, Cornwall, and the South of Ireland it luxuriates, standing out during severe winters without serious injury, and proving one of the most interesting and stately of water-loving plants.

It would be interesting to know if any of the yellow-spathed Arums or Richardias, such as Pentlandi and Elliottiana, are

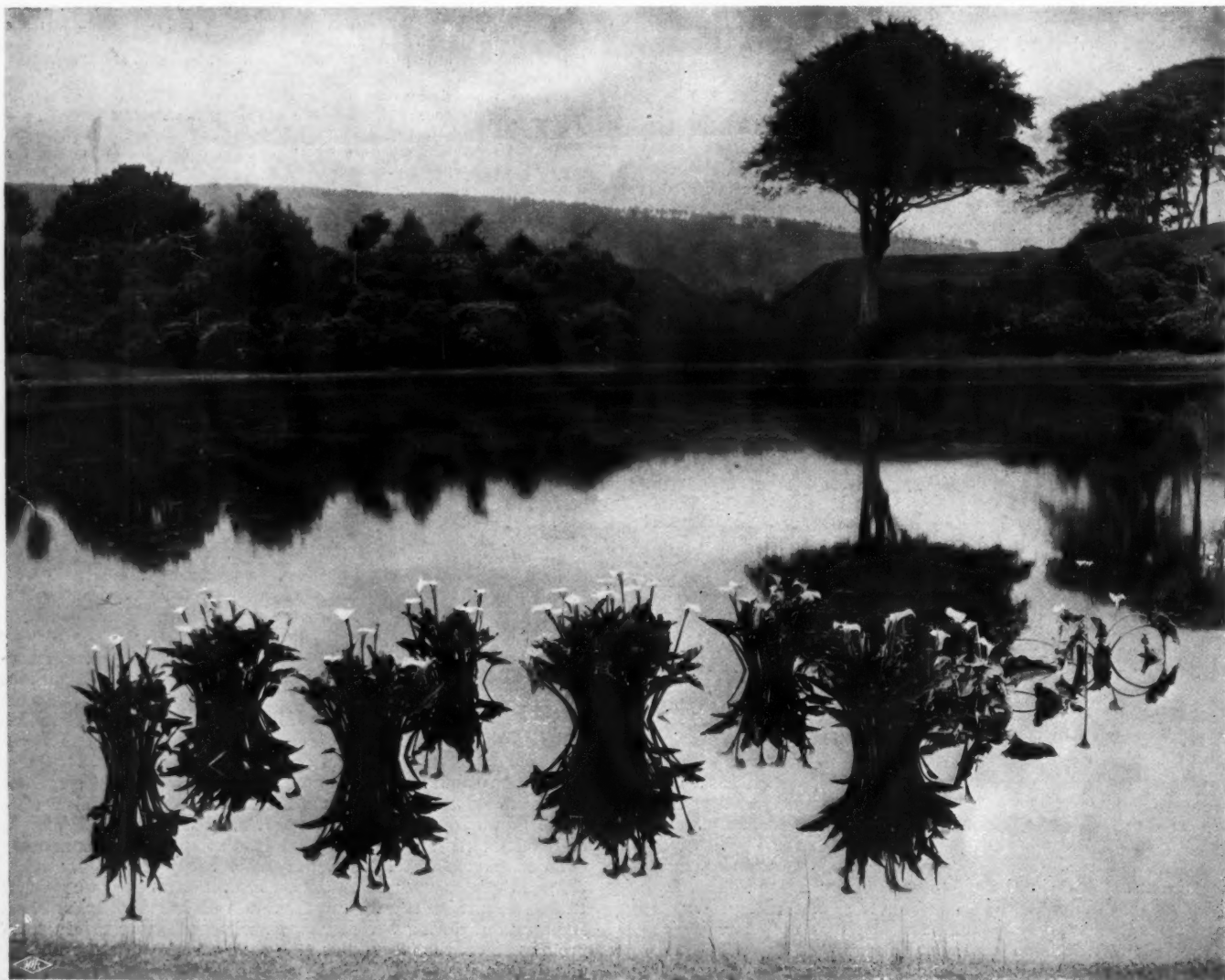
hardy out of doors; but we think the pure ivory colour of the more familiar kind far more beautiful in the open garden. The gardens of Oxenford Castle must be favourably placed, for the other photograph shows a magnificent growth of New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*), a noble, iris-like plant, usually happy only in quite the southern counties of England and Ireland, not so far North as Dalkeith. Here the *Phormium* has become established, and this colony on the lakeside is of remarkable interest, apart from its beauty, rising by the water's edge. The flower stems show how well the plants have flowered, but without these the *Phormium* is picturesque; its sword-like leaves are of a glaucous or silvery tone, and for this reason alone the plant is used in the summer garden, in conservatories, and for hall decoration—wherever, indeed, bold handsome foliage is desired. One reads in books that the New Zealand flax will



NEW ZEALAND FLAX (*Phormium tenax*) AT LOCHINCH, WIGTOWNSHIRE.

not live north of Britain, but only in genial places in the South; the accompanying illustration points out the error of definite statements. During our journeys through these isles, visiting gardens of interest, we are surprised to find plants that, according to books, should be in the greenhouse flourishing out of doors as if in their native land. We have seen the Mexican orange-flower (*Choisya ternata*) as comfortable in Norfolk as in Devonshire; but when planting things with a reputation for tenderness regard must be paid to that characteristic, and, when planting them out of doors, think of the position.

It would be interesting to know if other plants as tender as the arum lily and New Zealand flax live out of doors at Dalkeith. Such illustrations teach wholesome lessons, and must interest those who appreciate beautiful and unusual English gardening.



ROUND POND, CASTLE KENNEDY, WIGTOWNSHIRE.

THE BISON OF THE CZAR.

GREAT interest attaches to the pictures which we are able to publish of the wild bison of Europe in one of their last strongholds. The photographs were taken during the autumn of 1898 by Mr. E. N. Buxton, in the Imperial forest of Bielovège, in Lithuania, where they are carefully protected by the keepers employed for that purpose by the Czar. The forest consists largely of magnificent lime trees and other hardwood timber, on the branches and leaves of which the bison, like the elk, feed, though they also browse on the grass like the bison of North America. As they constantly feed at certain favourite spots in the forest, it was possible by a little manoeuvring to approach them, and to obtain these pictures of the animals in their natural habitat.

Modern naturalists have been at pains to prove that this mighty bison is *not* the animal hunted by the Germans in the old Hercynian forest under the name of *urus* or "*aurochs*," of which the Roman writers gave such startling accounts. That was the ancient wild bull, with long horns, and apparently a quick and savage temper like the Indian buffalo, though it is believed to be the ancestor of our large breeds of cattle. But the wild bison, or *bonassus*, which has survived, though the wild bull has disappeared, looks every inch of him a prehistoric beast, a creature which might have been hunted by the same savages who pursued the Irish elks with their primitive weapons, or which might have met and routed the wild dogs in the forests of Germany—the savage pack whose memory still survives in the legends of the ghostly hounds heard in full cry by night as they sweep through the dark forests of the North.

The size of the bison is made greater in appearance by the masses of curling shaggy hair, which grows on nape, hump, and down the spine. In winter this makes a huge mane, continued with a hogged crest all along the back. This gives an appearance of huge bulk and of the most barbarous savagery, which the rounded eyeball and blood-shot white of the eye increase. The European bison is not really the ferocious beast it looks; but anyone who admires the appearance of absolute innate wildness and uncouth bulk cannot find a more perfect example.

It is essentially a forest animal, the native king of the prehistoric woods of cold Europe, slow and gigantic, tardy in



AN OLD BULL.

became ultimately the sole oasis in which this unique animal survived in Western Europe, in the huge forest of Bielovège, or Bukolowitza, which covers 800 square miles. It is here that the Czar strictly preserves them for an Imperial quarry. At the other extremity of the Czar's European empire another herd survives on the northern slope of the Caucasus. Two which were shot there by Mr. Littledale are mounted as stuffed skins in the British Museum. The fortunes of the Bielovège herd, and of those which wander from it into the adjacent forest of Swislotsch, have risen and fallen with the political conditions of the territory in which they live, just as the deer in England dwindled in the days of the Civil War and increased in those of Charles II. They were killed off in a local revolt in 1831, when the herd was reduced to 637; in 1860 they had risen to 1,700. In the Polish revolt of 1863 they were reduced to 847, and though a few are kept in artificial surroundings in the local Zoo, their number in 1892 was said to be about 500.

Though nothing is likely to injure the full-grown bison, bears, wolves, and lynxes are all believed to kill the calves. In 1871 a special commission visited the forest, and arranged for the destruction of all wolves and bears so effectually, that in 1891 only six wolves were found there. From 1873 to 1893 only ten head of bison were killed by their natural enemies.

The huge size of the *bonassus* was not exaggerated by the old writers. He is far larger than the American bison, and more imposing in all respects. The bull is over 6ft. high at the shoulder, sometimes 6ft. 2in.—in other words, 18½ hands high! A bull killed in the Caucasus by Mr. Littledale was 10ft. 1in. in length from the nose to the root of the tail, and the girth of its body 8ft. 4in. In the Caucasus they are still really wild, though under Government protection, wandering in twos and threes in the dense thickets which clothe the mountains. It is, perhaps, best not to indicate the precise spots where they are most likely to be seen; but even the natives of the northern slopes of the mountains scarcely knew until recently that the bison survived there.

These wild bison are believed to be proof against rinderpest, though they have been known to die from liver fluke in wet seasons. In 1892 more than twenty perished by this disease. The cows at Bielovège now only produce one calf in three years.

It should be added that there is one other small herd, the property of the Prince of Pless, in Silesia. But this, if not descended from imported animals, is now maintained by occasional drafts from the Czar's Lithuanian stock.

Is there any chance of the *bonassus* increasing and propagating its kind more freely? On the whole we believe that there is. The Lithuanian herd is so completely different in blood and ancestry from the few survivors in the Caucasus, that if the Czar chose to give the order, and to cause a few of the latter to be caught and brought to Lithuania, the breed would be certain to gain in strength, and might well increase. The bovine animals can stand an astonishing amount of in-breeding, as witness the survival and size of the Chartley and Chillingham



BISON IN THE FOREST OF BIELOVEGE.

movement, torpid in disposition, too strong when full grown to fear any living enemy, too apathetic, in the proper sense of the word, to care much for cold, or storms, or inclement climates. It once lived in most of the deep, boggy, damp, unpleasant forests with which Northern and Central Europe were covered. In the ninth and tenth centuries it was killed in Germany and Switzerland as food. Up to the year 1500 it was common in Poland, and regularly hunted in royal hunts, with two or three thousand serfs to drive the game. In 1535 one was killed in Prussia, and in 1752 the King of the Poles, Augustus III., killed in hunting sixty of these bison in one day.

Poland, or that part of Poland which Russia annexed,

cattle. It is also well known that they can be crossed with other species, and that the crosses are fertile. Consequently there is a probability that some other wild bovine animal, perhaps the Indian gaur, or the gayal, might be induced to interbreed, and preserve at any rate some of the characteristics of this gigantic and ancient race.

ON THE GREEN.

IF ever there were a winter when the ardent golfer might find consolation in giving up his golf in order to defend his country in South Africa, it surely should be this winter of grace, in which the days on which golf could be enjoyed have been but very occasional. At first there was an aggravating alternation of frost and thaw, so that we deemed each condition the worst possible for golf until we experienced the other, and, later, things have settled down into frost and snow without any modification. So the brave men going to South Africa have not lost a great deal of good golf so far. Mr. Ball is said to have looked wonderfully fit and well when he sailed. Mr. Laurence Auchterlonie, of whom we lately heard driving remarkable distances and advancing remarkable theories to account for them, in Canada, has now, we are told, gone to South Africa to fight, and, perhaps incidentally, to make further experiments with the golf ball in that clear climate. It is wonderful what a number of fine athletes in the various branches are in South Africa now. The authorities that take charge of the Military Racquet Championship have found it necessary to put off that contest indefinitely, so many of the best soldier racquet players are at the front. We see a proposal mooted now for deferring the Amateur Championship until the autumn, by which time, it is presumed, the fighting men will have come home victorious from the war. But will they have returned by then? Time alone can show. At the moment of writing they do not seem to have far advanced, though we are in the constant expectation of hearing of forward moves in any one in or all the theatres of war. It is still the "fatal entanglement of Ladysmith"—that prodigious bunker! Mr. Tait is reported to have given a poor account of the country out there from the golfing point of view. A man would have to nibble his ball all the way, he is reported to have said, from Cape Town to the present advanced posts. Perhaps through the Orange Free State the going will be better. We are assured that our troops will find it so.

With snow practically ubiquitous, there is virtually nothing to record in the way of recent golf at home. There is no longer, indeed, any "on the green," for all the green is covered with snow in the place and at the moment of writing. United States golfers seem to be hard at work practising in order to give the best display they can when the great Vardon comes amongst them. It is now the season when secretaries of golf clubs are sending out their annual reports, and those reports that we have studied show a uniformly good face, bearing evidence to the continued, and even, if possible, the increasing popularity of golf, and the willingness of golfers to spend money on their greens and club houses. In every case the clubs are doing wisely in adopting the new rules of the game sanctioned by the general meeting of the Royal and Ancient Club in September last, always, of course, with the addition of certain local bye-laws required by the conformation of links whose special hazards do not include such feature as the Eden, the railway, and the stationmaster's garden. It would be a great thing for the golfing world, now that golfers go backwards and forwards across the Atlantic, if the American Union could see its way to adopting the code that we are glad to think is less imperfect than our old code used to be. There was a time, we believe, when they were very willing to meet our own authorities in bringing some common code into effect, but we were hampered by the very fact that at that time we really had no body with any vested authority to treat with them.

The London Scottish Golf Club have been unfortunate enough to suffer the loss by fire of their well-known quarters on Wimbledon Common. The conflagration, which raged on Friday last, seems to have been caused by the carelessness of one of the boy attendants. Erected at a cost of about £3,000 some two years ago, the building is reported to be fully insured.

HODGE ON THE WAR-PATH.

WHEN Hodge goes on the war-path as critic or exponent, a certain amount of confidence quietly possesses some respectfully silent listeners as to new light about to break forth. They are not, as a rule, disappointed. Sometimes there is a truly keen vision expressed in homely, yet strikingly powerful epigram; sometimes so much is it the reverse that we hold our breath, and feel that these products of the latest civilisation are indeed "fearfully and wonderfully made." But let the subject so handled be war itself, and illuminations are imminent. In this respect the rusticity of the present day does not appear to be behind the times of its forefathers.

It may scarcely be credited that considerable difference of opinion still exists as to the precise continent in which the theatre of the present war is situated. Yet who can fail to come to that conclusion who studies the following incident.

At the close of a lecture, which touched on the Transvaal, and specially emphasised the cruel character of the Matabele, the lecturer invited questions from his audience. A rubicund son of the soil, well on in middle life, rose and desired to know if that Matabeleland "warn't a long way off."

The lecturer assured him that it was.

"Beyond London?" said his interrogator.

"Oh, yes, a very long way beyond."

"Ah!" said Hodge, as he relapsed into his seat, with an omniscient wag of the head, "I allus did say as they was a murderin' set o' willuns in the sheres."

So, no doubt, there is at least one household in the land where the horrors of civil war are being properly dwelt upon. In a real yokel this utter confusion of continents may be pardonable, though amazing. It is only the limitation of view expressed in—

"Saith Vicar, when I was from home,

'Midst holiest places did I roam,

And scaled the heights of Sinai.

'Deed, sir,' quoth Broadcast, with a stare,

An' how be turmits lookin' there?"



Photo.

LONDON-SCOTTISH GOLF CLUB-HOUSE ABLAZE.

Copyright

But it is very remarkable to find quite as gross misunderstanding of the absorbing topic of the day in men of business in country towns; shrewd enough men in their own line, and yet on such a subject as the present war absolutely befogged in mind with the Hodge spirit. Just about the time that Sir Redvers Buller sailed for the Cape this prodigious exhibition of the scope and object of the present campaign was solemnly made.

"I'll bet you half-a-crown that before Christmas Day Buller will be in Khartoum." That man adorns the School Board Committee of his town.

Again, "Here's a pretty thing! Why they won't let us land our troops on the high seas!" That is from the same member of that School Board Committee.

But geographical subtleties are not the only difficulties which have to be encountered and brushed aside. It is perfectly astonishing how the most familiar expressions can be reproduced in words that bear some grotesque resemblance in sound without the least in sense. One Sunday evening in September last I was driving to a Wiltshire station, and being most anxious to hear the latest news, I asked my Jehu if he had seen a Sunday paper.

"Yes, sir," he instantly replied; "and they do say that Mr. Chamberlain has sent that there Krüger a pomatum."

This piece of latest intelligence so overwhelmed me that that I dared not ask for more, lest I might have for ever disgraced myself in his eyes as a heartless wretch. But the story has a sequel which also bears on the point before us. I dared to use it in a sermon as an illustration of how people may sometimes employ words without a very exact comprehension of their meaning. Twenty-four hours had not elapsed before a member of that congregation met another, and instantly wanted to know what a pomatum meant. He said he could not see the point of the illustration, it had bothered him all the way home, and directly he got there he went straight to his Cruden's Concordance, but could not find anything about it. What *did* it mean? Even women fail over such technical intricacies.

"My son a private!" she exclaimed, swelling with righteous indignation. "A private! No, sir! He's *not* a private. He's a nonconformed officer." Only by reason of protracted apologies did the storm die away in intermittent growls. The subject has never been so much as mentioned between us again, no doubt, because she regards the victory as so decisive.

But a more complete rout still comes to mind, more complete, because it puts to shame the whole Boer artillery, and this, too, at the hands of a woman.

"Ah, sir, you have caught me in a muddle; all the room upside down; and just look at the table with all them combustibles!"

"Combustibles! Where?"

"Why, there," she said, pointing to the table.

"Which?" I enquired.

"Why, all on 'em," she answered.

By dint of severe cross-examination it was elicited that in Norfolk "combustibles" mean odds and ends, chiefly of an edible character—a relic, doubtless, of some barbarous flourish of the knowledge of another tongue, "comestibles," just as the Norfolk labourer still talks of "going one journey"—*journée*. And there they were on the table, true enough: an old saucer, a

teaspoon, some crumbs, a bone or two, some mashed potatoes, etc. And then he began about the war.

"I've bin readin', sir, about this yir war, about them Boers firin' shells at our soldiers as don't properly bust, and so they don't do 'em no harm; and no wonder, the trumpery things! Why, will ye believe it, if the paper don't go on to say as they fill their shells with combustibles, jest like the innoiance of them Boers."

Gentle reader, just imagine our brave troops in the thick of the battle with teaspoons, and chop-bones, and lumps of sugar, and other deadly missiles raging round. It is sometimes quite amazing to find the appallingly simple solutions which lurk about what are usually mistaken for the most intricate problems, and in no department of our national difficulties is this more apparent than in the political aspects of the situation; herein is true child's play for the bucolic brain.

The impenetrable mask has now been torn from the innermost workings of Mr. Chamberlain's mind. He stands at last revealed in his true colours; for never before has the country even remotely guessed at the motives which have really actuated that policy towards the Transvaal, which has culminated in the present war. It has been reserved for Norfolk to disclose this dastardly treachery.

"Yes, I knows—I knows a lot, I does. I knows what that Chamberlain has been up to all the time. Doesn't he make cannon balls? and hasn't he bin a-sellin' of them to the Boers for years and years? can't yer see. Why as soon as they begins the fightin', they'll be wantin' to buy more from him, the warmint."

There is a market in the town which has produced this political Daniel. He sells pigs. He also appears ready to believe that the mercenary spirit is so catching, that even Englishmen in high places are willing to sell their country. The Boer military authorities are not the only sufferers from this style of criticism. The War Office has had to pass through the fire, too. About a month ago a retired colonel, who has seen active service in most parts of the globe, was approached by a yokel in much tribulation.

"Sir," he said, "I can't essactly make it out. Me and my missus has bin a-readin' about this war, and them papers say as how an army corpse will soon be seen a-marchin' about Africa. Whatever does it mean? And," with a fine scorn, "whatever will be the good of that? We can't a-make it out."

But the climax seems to have been reached by a local preacher in the days of the Afghan War, whose prayer for peace took this form:

"O Lord, stop this yer war. They tell me that it is all owin' to an ole Jew wot lives in London. Slay him, O Lord, slay him. If I slay him, they'll hang me. But do Thou slay him, they can't hang Thee."

The pacific spirit of this prayer seems inimitable. It is almost a pity that a man with the best intentions in the world should not attempt to carry them out, even by the safe methods which he suggests to someone else.

W. F. G. SANDWICH.



A QUERY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Can any of your readers recommend me a place in Europe where during the months of April and May I can find the largest and most varied quantities of fresh fruit?—L. E.

PONY CARRIAGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As I have on several occasions seen photographs of pony tandems reproduced in your paper, I enclose a snap-shot of my four-in-hand of ponies, which, I think, may interest your readers. I have driven a team for many years, and the ponies have generally been Exmoors, but in this team the leaders are Welsh. They average about 12h.—M. W.



PROTECTION OF SPAWNING TROUT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—We have just now—that is to say, just after the turn of the year—been indulged with an abundance of rain, in consequence of which every little brooklet has been, after its degree, in full spate. In further consequence, again, every

brooklet has been the scene of the running up of countless trout, running up from the greater rivers, intent on the all-important and essential business of spawning. Of this there is still a further consequence, that every brooklet is followed up its course, wheresoever that course does not take it through severely protected ground, by hordes of idle small boys, who follow the trout and grope for them in the pools, bringing out often a good fish of 1lb. or even more. Now I am still young enough, thank goodness, to feel a good deal of sympathy with the boys. Fish diet, no doubt, is a rarity with them, and the sport is fine. If only the weather were a little warmer one would like to be at it oneself, knee deep in the brooklet pools, chasing the frightened trout. It is excellent fun. But we who have grown to years of discretion know that we can have far better fun with a 1lb. trout if we get him to rise to a fly and hook him on fine gut at the end of a single-handed rod. Do not let us have any cant about the business, nor denounce the boys' nefarious work as "unsportsmanlike," or any nonsense of that kind. It is really very good sport, and the best sport these little beggars are ever likely to get with the fish. Nor let us insist too much on the fact that the fish at this season are right out of condition and wretched eating, for though that, again, is true, still they are better eating than any other fish that are likely to come in these small boys way. But let us take the really sensible and selfish view of it all—which is the view we truly take of most things if only we knew it—and the conclusion we must then come to is that we would much rather these fish were preserved for the purposes of our angling than pulled out by the fingers of little boys. And, granted that, the means to the end are simple. Let the proprietor of each bit of water in which there are trout that can give him sport consider carefully what brooklets there are over which he has any control or proprietary rights, and if these brooklets anywhere lead away into common places, or places where no keepers or surveyors of a more amateur kind can keep a watchful eye. At the limit of the watchable part let him put a grating which no reasonable-sized fish can pass. It is very easily done. Then, if it be objected, "Oh! but the fish must have somewhere to go and spawn," and this part of the brooklet is not suitable, let there be cut a side channel or two, giving about the right amount of gentle flow, with a gravelly bottom, and the trout will soon avail themselves of it. But of a truth the trout will generally find for themselves suitable places for their spawning. They may be trusted to see to that. What the proprietor can do is to stop them from going up into parts of the brooklets over which he has no control, and where, in consequence, they get taken out by dozens and are never seen again. I am quite convinced that the ordinary country gentleman, and perhaps even the ordinary river watcher, has little notion of the extent to which this groping for trout goes on, the skill of the boys at the work, and the numbers of fish that are taken out. Naturally, the boys and their people do not say much about it, and it is necessary to be rated by them rather as in sympathy with poverty than with property to get an insight into it. But the drain on the trout population thus caused is enormous, and it is but necessary for it to be fairly well realised to incite the proprietors of rivers to take the very simple means that are necessary for its prevention.—F. L. M.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—One of your correspondents on this subject suggests a question which I should be very glad to see discussed in your columns. Are cooking stoves instead of open fire-places suitable for cottages? The following points occur to me: Stoves can be quickly lighted and soon give out heat, hence economy of fuel; the stove pipes can be used to warm the upper rooms in winter, and could be covered with some non-conducting material in summer. I believe the stove to be an excellent cooking machine. When shooting in Canada I have often had to thank the stove and the hospitality of settlers for many an excellent meal. I do not know whether coal is as suitable as wood for cooking stoves. The use of the stove in our villages would create a ready market for cordwood. I will leave the hygienic and cost questions to the correspondents who, I hope, will follow me. I am rather surprised not to see any mention of ventilation in the discussion of the cottage question.—VENATOR.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am interested in the plans appearing in COUNTRY LIFE for labourers' cottages. One item of rural life is forgotten in these designs; the class who inhabit them can only afford one fire daily—more than that is impossible. Cottages planned with a living-room and kitchen, though excellent in theory, have the worst results in practice. The kitchen fire only is lit, the living-room is uninhabited. I was in six cottages last Saturday afternoon. Two were very old-fashioned—the sort that would probably be condemned by the County Council—with thatched roofs and mud walls. They each had one large kitchen-living-room with fire-place in it, and small pantry-scullery without fire-place; a good fire burnt in the grate, the best furniture was in daily use. The houses were warm, for small windows, thatched roofs, and thick mud walls are very warm. In each case a good housewife would have that sitting-room in good order and comfortable against her man's return; his arm-chair drawn up to the fire, his wide comfortable table spread, and the children plenty of room to play about without interfering with his ease. The remaining four cottages were modern—brick-built, slate roofs, large windows, a big living-room with fire-place, a small kitchen with fire-place—cottages that would be approved by County Councils and modern reformers. Each cottage was exceedingly cold—brick, slate, and large windows are very cold indeed; also the heat in summer in such cottages, especially in the bedrooms just under the slates, is extreme. The old cottages are as cool in summer in proportion as they are warm in winter. In each of these latter four cottages the fire was lit only in the kitchen; the living-room was uninhabited; it was carefully swept and garnished and put away; the arm-chair was kept there; in no case were the children allowed to go into it—this is the universal law; the family lived entirely in the small kitchen; the evening meal was laid on a small deal table; the chairs were the ordinary straight Windsor; the floors were brick; the scullery was extremely cold and comfortless. The large space of the living-room was entirely wasted; it would be used on the occasion of a christening or a wedding, or on a summer Sunday afternoon; never otherwise. Reformers object to the cooking and washing going on in the living-room and the small dark bedrooms. They forget these people are an outdoor people and only come indoors to sleep and eat; they require warmth at night and comfort in the daytime—both difficult to obtain where night is spent in a large room, with thin brick walls and big windows under a slate roof; and the meals are taken in a scullery, with scullery furniture. It were better to build

according to the law of life of the people who are to live in these cottages. Again, people talk of the expense of building in remote country districts. It is expensive now, because people seem at pains to build with the material that can only be obtained at a distance. Consequently as little material as possible is used, and spread over as much space as possible, with the result of great expense, thin walls, skimpy roofs, and the extremes of heat and cold. One has yet to meet the "builder" who would send in an estimate for building with the material of the district; in this instance, chalk and flint and straw. There are cottages in this district thus built, and 200 years old. One day a storm blew off some of our slates, and the rain also came in. An old woman commiserated me, and added, proudly, "Of course such would

never happen to me, for I has thatch on my roof; never a drop o' rain do I get through in winter; never does the sun strike through in summer." Of course such cottages must be kept in repair, but that is the case with all buildings, and it is cheaper and easier if your material is at hand. We talk of the amelioration of the lot of the country labourer. A hundred years ago he was much more comfortable than he is now. — R. M. NEWALL, Salisbury.



A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE.

before. In 1844, Charles Martin, younger son of Robert Martin, Esq., of Steward's Hay, near Groby, in Leicestershire, steward of the Lord Stamford of those days, was a pupil of my father's at Market Bosworth, in the same county. When he came back to school after the Easter holidays he had a marvellous story to tell us of a wild cat that was occasionally to be seen in the neighbourhood of Groby Pool—the largest piece of water in the Midlands—and that it was in the habit of catching fish in the pool. This latter item of information was generally disbelieved, though I fancy it was true, and the whole story was relegated to the category of things requiring confirmation. It was some time in the spring of the following year (1845) that there was a nest of wild kittens in a hollow tree in Bosworth Park itself, which the old keeper had determined to exterminate, whereupon I and another lad at the school—one John Lee—decided to save them if possible. In the tree where the nest was was a wooden stage erected for shooting the deer—the finest Norwegian I have ever seen—and a ladder up to it. Towards evening we went to the tree carrying a leather bag, boxing gloves, and fencing masks. We put these on when we got to the tree, and I mounted first. The old cat jumped out of the hole on to the edge and was inclined to show fight, but I knocked her off the tree on to the ground, and my companion chased her a little way towards the wood. I could reach the kittens fairly easily, but it was a tough job to get them out and into the bag, and anything so infernal as their faces and the various noises they made I never saw nor heard. However, we got them all at last, four of them, one considerably smaller than the rest, and carried them off home. There was a small woodyard at the end of the schoolhouse with high walls all round, and more than half full of dry wood, great and small. Into this cats' paradise they were turned, and lots of milk and raw meat provided. Next morning the little one was found dead, but the other three did well and thrived amazingly. They never would come into sight, however, of their own accord, and never showed the slightest intention of getting tamed or accustomed to my presence even. As soon as they heard a footstep outside they began to spit and swear, and never stopped as long as they thought the enemy was in the neighbourhood. When they could not avoid being laid hold of they flung themselves down on their backs and ripped away vigorously with their hind legs, while they clawed tight with their fore paws and bit for all they were worth. Even the boxing gloves were not always sufficient protection. After about five weeks, when they were already considerably bigger than any ordinary grimalkin, we turned them up in the wood and never saw nor heard of them again. Two were toms. The photographs of the kittens in COUNTRY LIFE are exactly like my young friends. The portrait of the tom is like the mother, but my lady's head was considerably less in proportion to her body. All had the huge quarters and the club tail, which seemed to be always stiff with fury, the hairs sticking out like those of a bottle-brush. The colour in all cases was yellow tabby, very distinctly marked, the dark stripes almost a deep fox colour, the lighter parts a tawny buff. They gave me the impression of being absolutely pure bred. They seemed to me fully four times the size of a tame cat and kittens, but part of this is probably due to some exaggeration in one's memory of the size of things when one was a lad. You, I feel sure, will forgive a bronchitic old retired barrister for inflicting these reminiscences upon you. I am not and never was a sportsman at all, only a mighty lover of cats, and I was very deeply interested in my capture. — SEBASTIAN EVANS.

WILD CATS.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I have just accidentally come on an account of Mr. Leigh Pemberton's pets in the Christmas Number of COUNTRY LIFE, and am moved to place on record a small fact which may interest you, and has, I believe, never been recorded

FIRST FLIGHT OF YOUNG BIRDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Thinking that many of your readers are interested in natural history, I venture to send you the following: The manner in which the young cuckoo gets rid of its fellow-nestlings, so well described and illustrated by photographs and an excellent drawing in Mr. Japp's recent book on the cuckoo, is, in my opinion, merely a decidedly striking example of an occurrence by no means very rare, though rather unusual, namely, the performance without previous experience of actions that are generally learned gradually through experience. When this happens immediately after hatching it becomes more striking, but these cases are not essentially different from those which occur later on, where immediate success is obtained without previous experience. The most remarkable instance is what occurs with the young of some of the mound-builders, whose eggs are so exceedingly large compared with the bird, and are hatched by the heat of fermenting vegetable matter in the mounds constructed by the parent birds; the young are able to fly and shift for themselves as soon as hatched. A very interesting account of Megapodius Cumingii was published some years ago in the *Ibis*. They have the appearance of *adult* birds of a smaller species, are about the size of the common quail, and look a good deal like a miniature bantam hen, the tail feathers being set on and carried "cocked," as in the ordinary barnyard fowl. The immediate running about and self feeding of chickens, and also of partridges, on leaving the egg, is too well known to insist on. The freshly-hatched young of the great northern diver are said both to swim and to *dive* well immediately, the nest being close to the water's edge. It would be interesting to know what happens in the guillemot, also a diver, but hatching its young on the ledges of high cliffs. I come now to a case that fell under my own observation, and concerning which I published a notice some years ago in one of the technical reviews, but which I will briefly notice here as it bears upon the question. I had on theoretical grounds formed the opinion that the young of the ruby-throated humming-bird (*Trochilus colubris*) would fly perfectly without previous practice on leaving the nest. A nest having been found in the grounds of personal friends, I had the opportunity of testing the matter by careful observation, and found my prediction to be quite correct; but also something occurred which I had not foreseen, viz., the young some days before leaving the nest began to flutter their wings, at first only a little, then more vigorously, and for the last day or two would just balance their weight, humming-bird fashion, and one even so scrambled down on to the branch and back again into the nest. They left the nest at intervals of one day, were full grown and flew as well as old birds, but made shorter flights. Now the flight of humming-birds is quite unlike that of all other birds, and very nearly resembles that of hawk-moths, but the young birds executed the same graceful evolutions, and with the same halo-like vibrations of the wings as did the old bird; indeed, had I seen them by accident I should not have known them to be young ones. One very striking thing about the young humming-birds was the swift-like head and bill during the earliest age; I was the more impressed by this because young woodcock, covered with down, that I had already seen, had the characteristic bill of their species—a long one. It would be interesting to know whether the same happens with the European woodcock, and also with the curlew. The young humming-birds were first seen by me on a Saturday; the previous Wednesday the nest contained two eggs, and the following Thursday the long bill had become quite perceptible, looking for all the world like an artificial bill stuck into and partly over the other one. I have dwelt at some length on the young humming-bird's flight, because I am not aware of anyone else having made a similar observation, and because I deem the case a typical one of its kind. I believe that the same thing happens with young swifts, but have never had an opportunity of testing the matter. If any of your readers should be in a position to observe the first flight of young swifts, such observation would be very interesting. I do not know of any other British bird that I should expect to fly perfectly on leaving the nest; swallows and sand-martins should come the nearest to it, and after them, perhaps, the peregrine falcon. Puffins, razor-bill auks, and guillemots I should expect to swim and dive well from the very first time they enter the water, but I should expect them to acquire flight gradually. — VIATOR.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM INDIA.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Two of us went out for a shoot at Christmas and got a few antelope and duck. I send you a photograph of Christmas morning in camp. Our servants, in honour of what they call "Natal-ke-din," had decorated our tent ropes and poles with leaves and flowers. Our two spaniels are to be seen, one under the table and the other under the bed in the tent. The second photograph, which is not such a good one, shows the result of a shoot we had next day at duck. We got twenty-five, if we may count the partridge on the ground in front of the basket and the flamingo whose long neck and ugly beak may be seen in the middle of the picture. — W. S. AND T. R.

